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ANALYTICAL OUTLINES

OF THE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE,

OR

A CURSORY EXAMINATION

OF

ITS MATERIALS AND STRUCTURE.

"Speaking existed before Grammarians, and Reasoners before Logicians."
Campbell.

"S'il n'a pas l'instrument qu'il faudroit employer, il se sert de celui qu'il á tout pret."—*De Brosses.*

IN THE

FORM OF FAMILIAR DIALOGUES,

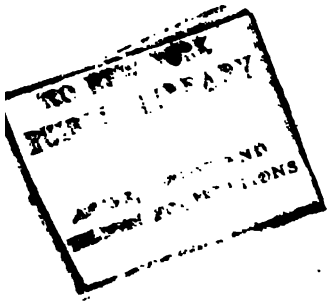
INTENDED TO

Accompany Grammatical Studies.

BY JOHN LEWIS.

RICHMOND:
Printed by Shepherd & Pollard.

1825.



District of Virginia, to wit:

****
* L. S. *
****

Be it remembered, that on the twenty-first day of September, in the fiftieth year of the Independence of the United States of America, *John Lewis*, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit:

"Analytical outlines of the English language, or a cursory examination of its materials and structure.

"*Speaking existed before Grammarians, and Reasoners before Logicians.*"
CAMPBELL.

"*S'il n'a pas l'instrument qu'il faudroit employer, il se sert de celui qu'il á tout pret.*"—DE BROSSES.

In the form of familiar Dialogues, intended to accompany Grammatical studies. By John Lewis."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act, for the encouragement of Learning by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned."

RD: JEFFRIES,
Clerk of the District of Virginia.

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PREFACE.

The age of Lord Bacon was emphatically an age of reform. The Mind of Man, released from the laborious trifling which had long exhausted its powers in useless exertion, then, for the first time, directed its view to the objects of true knowledge; and high in the exhilirating pride of emancipation from bondage, then received the impetus that has ever since urged its untiring and resistless course. The inductive system, known before, but then sanctioned as a method of reasoning by the Genius of that great man, has conducted us to surer results in every department of Science; but the spirit of enquiry, awakened at length to its legitimate purposes, has seldom been turned to a philosophical examination of Language, the indispensable instrument with which these purposes are to be accomplished.

When we reflect more closely upon the character of this Universal System of Signs; how intimately it is connected with all our pursuits; how important its ministry to Reason, in all her attempts to explore the phenomena of Nature and to communicate all that is acquired, we are alike surprised at the little care which has been taken, to *define and suit its terms* to the uses of mental investigation, and at the common inattention to its structure, and to the true origin of its materials. Not many radi-

cal words have been discovered in our language, in proportion to the whole number of them: when we re-trace the modern words a few steps towards their primitives, without arriving at them, we reach the point which, with some exceptions, has ever bounded our knowledge of its Etymology. Our progress has been equally limited in tracing the analogies of modern formations, and the general truths by which these have been regulated; and perhaps still less has been done in discovering the reasons, upon which are founded the laws of connexion, that have come to be established between words in sentences. Scaliger, Vossius and Quinctilian, seem to have known as much of the philosophy of Language, as Mr. Harris, Lord Monboddo, or Dr. Johnson.

The modern Grammarians have, for the most part, followed their predecessors, seldom extending their enquiries into the derivation of words, beyond the Greek, Latin or French, and not unfrequently deducing from thence, words which descended to us from the Tuetonic, through the Mæso-Gothic and Anglo-Saxon. From prejudice or ignorance, they have not attended to the fact, that the Tuetonic is the more ancient Language, and that in the Greek and Latin there are many words which owe their origin to this source, and which are the near relations of English words, not derived from the Greek and Latin, but collateral branches of the same stock.

It would seem, indeed, from the little use which has been made of Induction in the investigation of language, that it is thought to be an instrument incapable of useful application to the subject. Before

we assume this conclusion, the experiment should be fully and fairly made; when this shall be done, and the result shall ascertain its inefficiency, it will be time to abandon the project as hopeless. It were rashness, not reason, to conclude *a priori* against the supposition, when this method has been so usefully applied, both to physical and intellectual enquiries. In the close relation of language with the latter branch of science, have we not reason to believe that such experiment will be most successful, when made by those who shall bring to the work, the purest love of truth, who shall be well acquainted with the instrument, and who shall handle it with skill? Without any pretensions to much knowledge of this instrument, and with very little dexterity in managing it, an humble and weak, but it is hoped, not an unavailing effort has been made in the following "Outlines," to direct the attention of the more able, to this interesting subject.

When we have ascertained the objects which we may not attain, we approach nearer to the knowledge of all that are within our reach, as by tracing the periphery of a circle we plainly perceive not only what falls without its line, but also the extent that is included in it. Instead of seeking in Language for what does *not* exist, and cannot be found, "words which mean nothing in themselves," we should direct our attempts to the discovery of what *does* exist, may perhaps, if rightly sought, be found, and if found, will certainly prove useful. The particular idea of which each word is the sign; the extension, limitation, and analogous uses of it; whe-

ther it be an elementary word or a compound, a primitive or subsequent formation; if a subsequent formation, the resolution of it, into the constituent materials; the laws that have governed the formation of these subsequent or secondary words; the reputable customary meanings and connexions of these signs in discourse; to bring all these phenomena to the test of analysis with a view to the proper understanding of the language, and to the developement of its materials and structure, seems an object which industry may accomplish. The discovery, likewise, of radical words common to many languages, and of those general truths and comprehensive analogies which depend upon the principles of human nature, prevail in all languages and all subjects, and without observing which, no man ever emerged from the "mere haberdashery of experiment and observation," would greatly facilitate the acquisition of foreign tongues. All these desiderata are open to an enquiry whose limits become contracted by our knowing what we seek, and in which the probabilities of success are heightened by our seeking only what exists.

Words are used to declare our thoughts; and to do this, it is necessary that we should attach the same idea to every word, as does the person to whom the communication is made: ease, elegance, and brevity of expression, are also worthy of attention; and Induction is deemed the readiest method of acquiring all of these. The classification of words is of little consequence, except as it facilitates or impedes our acquaintance with them, and increases or diminishes

our power to use them correctly. Do the present names of the parts of speech, and their present classification, aid us so much in these respects, as they limit our enquiries to *common resemblance in general signification*? Can any other knowledge of words than their *individual import*, enable us either to understand or to employ them properly? I know that pupils, by the observance of analogy, may parse sentences grammatically, and at the same time may be entirely ignorant of their meaning. Is not the system plainly defective when its terms and classifications lead to this result, and should evils so fatally adverse to its grand design, be permitted to remain?

It may appear rash and presumptuous, to censure a system which is, in some sort, consecrated in our eyes by habit and long use, or to threaten with innovation and change, a nomenclature which is associated with our earliest ideas of what is right and proper. But Truth has nothing to fear from free and candid discussion. If the views which are here taken of the materials and structure of Language be mistaken, none will be deceived, and few will be led astray; they are brightened by no splendor, they are disclosed by no authority. It is the wish of their author, that they may be examined with eyes open to the light; impartial, looking for truth and not for beauty. He is conscious that he has done but little; and if that little be erroneous, none will receive its correction with more satisfaction than himself. Even this slight performance had been recommended by better exe-

cution, had been strengthened by greater research, could its author have enjoyed the assistance of a more extensive library. The authors to whose writings he is indebted, are generally mentioned in the body of the dialogues or in the margin, or in the notes: if there be an instance in which the debt is unacknowledged, his error is unintentional. He will not, in concluding these preliminary remarks, repeat the dictum of Erasmus, in regard to his Vulgate edition of the Scriptures: "Illud ausim polliceri, quisquis hanc nostram domi legerit, suam rectius intellecturus."—But he says, that his object is to excite enquiry, and to disseminate what he conceives to be the truth, *for purposes of practical utility.* Even a partial accomplishment of these wishes, will amply re-pay his labour.

Llangollen, Va. June 18, 1825.

DIALOGUE THE FIRST.

Papa. How did you like Mr. Hunter's oration to day?

George. Very well; though he did not use some words, as you do, and I heard it remarked, that he does not speak grammatically.

P. I am sorry to hear that. He would be more attentively heard, and better understood if he spoke the language correctly.

G. I must ask you then to teach me the grammar.

P. It is time now that you should attend to the study of language. You have read a considerable number of instructive, well written books, and have thus acquired the materials necessary for that purpose. Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry have exercised your reason and taught you to arrange and compare your thoughts. It will, therefore, give me pleasure to assist you in acquiring this indispensable branch of a good education.

G. With what grammar shall I commence? I have seen several in the library.

P. With Mr. Lindley Murray's. But, you must first become, in some measure, acquainted with that which is in your own head.

G. In my head, sir?

P. Yes; and in the head of every person who understands ordinary conversation and can read as well as you do. The first grammar came out of the head of some man, and I see no reason why you should not have one in yours. The principles of our nature are the same in all, though they differ in degree.

G. Well, I must get you to find it for me; for, I should not know in what corner of my head to search for that which I never suspected to exist there. I am afraid we shall have to call to our aid Doctor Gall.

P. We shall not need the assistance of the craniologists I hope. We possess, indeed, many treasures of which we are equally ignorant, until something sets us to thinking that they may exist. We then think, and find them. I will attempt to set you to thinking, as the fall of an apple did Sir Isaac Newton. He discovered a law of nature, and you perhaps may find a grammar.

G. I have read an account of his discovery of the law of gravitation, in that entertaining little book "Evenings at Home."

P. I am glad that you recollect it. That little book contains much interesting and useful matter. You must now, like a traveller who enquires the way to some place, attend to the directions or you will get lost.

G. Well, sir, proceed if you please; I promise all the attention which I can command.

P. In teaching you, as in giving directions to a traveller, I begin at some known point. Look on this paper and tell me what you see. (A Hat.)

G. Why, I see a hat.

P. Indeed! I see a hat on the table yonder. If this on the paper is a hat, it is a very small one and made of very odd materials.

G. Papa, you understand me; I mean that this on the paper is *the word hat*, and not a real hat.

P. You do? Why I thought that *words* issued from our mouths, and I hardly think that these black scratches came out of your mouth or mine.

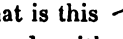
G. I know they did not. I meant to say, that this is a *written hat; the letters that stand for a hat.* They make me think of a real hat.

P. Very well; I understand you now. The letters you say, make *you* think of a hat. Do you think that they would make your little brother John think of a hat?

G. No; *he* does not know how to read. He would not be able to distinguish these letters, from the scratches which he makes on the slate, and calls *his A B C.* And I know that they are "*a h-a-t;*" letters that spell "*a hat.*"

P. You say, letters that spell "*a hat.*" I am not sure that *you* exactly understand what you mean when you say "letters that spell a hat." What do you mean by *letters,* or by *a letter?*

G. I mean—Papa I know what I mean, but I find a difficulty in expressing my meaning.

P. Well, George, I will help you to get at your meaning, or to express it. What is this  ?

G. Why, it is a mark made with a pen.

P. Very well. And what is this, A?

G. It is the letter A.

P. Is it not also a mark made with a pen?

G. Yes, it is.

P. Why then do you call one mark made with a pen a *mark* or *scratch,* and the other mark the letter A?

G. Because I do not know what that ugly crooked mark or scratch *means* or stands for.

P. And what, pray, does that mark stand for which you are pleased to call "*the letter A?*"

G. Why, it stands for—A.

P. And what is that?*

G. It is a sound of the voice. I have found it out; and *so do all the letters.*† They make us think of sounds of the voice. They are the signs of sounds.

P. Whereas, other marks not agreed upon by men to be signs of sounds, do not make us think of sounds. We

* Prudens interrogatio est dimidium scientiæ.—*Bacon.*

† See note A, at the end of the book.

have now arrived at one very important truth, which you must remember, that what we call a letter, is a mark standing for, or representing a sound of the voice.

G. I have learnt something more.

P. What is that?

G. Why, that after we have agreed to use certain signs for certain things, the signs seem to become so fastened to the things, that we mistake them for the things, as I did h-a-t, for a hat; and, that the *sign* brings into the mind all the thoughts that the thing itself would.

P. We will examine this at some other time. You know that in English we use twenty-six marks, or letters, for sounds, called the alphabet, by the use of which we represent, in *writing*, all the *words uttered* by the mouth.

G. Yes, I do; and I think of them now very differently from what I have ever thought before, as a wonderful and useful invention; an instrument of communication. Who first taught men to use these marks for signs of sounds?

P. We do not know with certainty who he was, but he was a great benefactor of the human race, and his invention is the most splendid achievement of human intellect, by the use of which we can record all our knowledge,—all subsequent inventions and discoveries,—communicate all that speech can utter,—and make the fleeting sounds immortal.

G. I had no idea of the value of the letters; they are silent talkers, whose discourse can be seen, and if forgotten can again be seen. They do not pass away as sounds to be heard no more; to be faintly recollected or entirely mistaken.

P. Your remarks are just. Sounds vibrate on the ear, and are like a rain drop which falls on the lake, curls its surface for a moment and is lost forever.

G. I suppose as we use only twenty-six letters, they are the signs of all the sounds of the voice?

P. Not of all the sounds of the voice, but of the articulate sounds.

G. What are articulate sounds?

P. They are those sounds which are either words, or parts of words. They are denominated the elementary sounds, or first principles of language.

G. The letters then, their signs, are the elements of words written, or written language?

P. Yes, by the combination of *articulate sounds*, we make words, and by the combination of letters, we make the signs of words.

G. Are the same letters always the signs of the same sounds?

P. No; if they were we could never doubt or differ about the pronunciation of words. Our alphabet is imperfect. The letters do not all represent each one sound, as you may ascertain very easily. Pronounce the words fate, fat, far, fall, or the words no, not, move, and you will perceive the different sounds given to A and O. The capacity of the letter to stand for these different sounds, is called *the power* of *a letter*. When we know how a letter is sounded in any word, we are said to know its power in that word.

G. It seems to me, that one sign should stand for but one thing: we could then neither doubt nor mistake.

P. When we can distinguish the marks called letters from other marks, we are said to know *the forms* of the letters.

G. So soon as we know their forms and powers, we may go to work with them I suppose?

P. Yes; but I hope your combinations will be better than those of Winefred Jenkins, or of the man who wrote Kawphy for Coffee.

G. He spelled incorrectly, but ingeniously, I think; for he had the right sound, without a single right letter.

P. True; but let me know what you mean by spelling?

G. Since I know what the letters are, and what they are signs of, I think I can give you a definition of spelling.

P. What does it mean?

G. In speaking, the pronunciation of the articulate sounds that make a word; in writing, the making of the letters which are the signs of the articulate sounds, in the word intended to be signified, is spelling.

P. Then I suppose you know what is meant by a syllable?

G. I believe I do; a word, or so much of a word, as is pronounced by one effort or impulse of the voice, as ar-ti-cu-late in the word articulate.

P. The subject of this conversation is what you have been learning ever since your mother first taught you to call the letters by their common names; to give them their different sounds; to combine them into syllables, and the syllables into words. It is what the grammarians call orthography, or the first part of grammar, which teaches "the nature and powers of the letters, and the just method of spelling words."

G. Then I understand the orthography of a word, when I write down the letters which are the proper signs of the articulate sounds composing the word.

P. Yes; and the letters thus written, are *the sign of the word.* Persons who spell incorrectly, or who write wrong letters in a word, are said to be ignorant of orthography.

G. I have been learning orthography a long time, without knowing it.

P. You mean, without knowing that what you were learning is called by that name. Remember the word now that you know its meaning. If we call things by their reputable, customary names, we will be understood by more persons than if we were to use any other names or signs to denote them. You may now read all that Mr. Murray has written on orthography; which, I hope, you are now prepared to understand. Pay particular attention to his observations on the powers of the letters; their division into vowels and consonants; the difference between the pro-

per and improper dipthongs; the rules for spelling or syllabication, and make many experiments with your own organs of speech, on the sounds of the letters. Do not commit any of the rules to memory, till you understand their import. For, the object in committing things to memory, should be to have them ready for use; and we cannot use to the greatest advantage, what we do not understand.

DIALOGUE THE 2d.

G. In our last conversation you called words signs, as well as letters. I suppose you meant written words?

P. Both written and spoken words are signs. The written words are the signs of spoken words, and spoken words are the signs of things, or of other words. The written word H-a-t, is the sign of a sound of the voice, by which *we denote a thing*, which you often throw about and abuse, but which was made to cover and defend the head. The letters H-a-t are the sign of the sound, and the sound is the sign of the thing. If in speaking of your hat, I say "*It* will soon be worn out," the sound "*it*," serves as a substitute for the sound *hat*, and in writing, the letters "*i-t*" answer the same purpose. In either case the sign substituted for hat, makes you think of the thing.

G. Yes it does; and I know that the "*it*" may be considered as another name for *the thing*, or as a substitute

for the sound, or written sign of the sound hat, by which the thing is denoted; so, that in the latter case, the word "*it*" may be called the sign of another word, the *word* hat.

P. You will find, by making a few experiments, that the word "*it,*" is a very general term, and may be used to denote *any thing spoken of*, or *the name* of any thing spoken of; whereas the word hat, has no such general power.

G. There are then two sorts of words?

P. What do you mean by *sorts?*

G. I mean kinds or classes. Things that are alike, we say are of the same kind. For instance, all horses are of the same kind, because they are all alike in some respects though not exactly alike in all respects.

P. The grammarians have not agreed on the number of classes into which words should be divided; nor have they all arranged the same words in the same classes. But, the consideration of this subject is not of so much consequence to you, as is the clear comprehension of the principle upon which all classification is founded. The existence in language of such words as you just now used; (sorts, classes, kinds, &c.) which are very numerous and useful, depends on something that you must now attend to particularly.

G. I suppose it depends on the likeness of things to one another.

P. Not on their general likeness, but on some certain traits of resemblance common to all that are classed. A sheep and a man are but little alike, and yet the general term animal, includes both. Copper and silver have little resemblance, yet the word metal is applied to either. The eagle and the humming bird belong to the same class.

G. In many respects, these things are very different. Their classification must depend on a few points of resem-

blance. And it now seems to me that we may select any point of resemblance and class all the objects possessing that point, together. I might class, on resemblance in *colour*, all black things together, all white, &c.; or, I might select *form* as the point of resemblance, and have a class for the square objects and one for the circular, &c.

P. Very well; when things resemble one another in some respect or respects, we class them together and invent a *word*, to express that *feeling of the mind* which arises from the observation of the common resemblance; or, I rather think, that instead of inventing a new word for that purpose, we use the name of that object, in which object, we first observed the traits of resemblance, to denote all other objects possessing the same traits, because the same state or feeling of the mind is produced by all the objects when *we attend to their traits of likeness only.** The same word then would answer a double purpose.

G. Yes, it would serve either to denote an individual included in the class, or to express that state of the mind arising from the observed resemblance in all of the class.

P. The word animal then, which is the sign of a state of mind produced by only those creatures to which animal life, spontaneous motion, and organized bodies, are common, may be applied to a man or a sheep, as they both possess these traits of resemblance.

G. Yes; and to every other thing in the creation, in which these traits of resemblance are found. I think I shall now be able to class things myself, and to tell to what class any thing belongs so soon as I am told, or ascertain for myself the points of resemblance on which their classification has been made to depend.

P. Perhaps you may; but this will avail but little, unless you know more of objects than the few points of resemblance which constitute the basis of their classification.

* See note B, at the end of the book.

You must have a more intimate acquaintance, to use them advantageously. The carpenter's apprentice who knew the names of all the tools in the shop, and who could arrange them before he could either hew, or saw, or plane, or fit two pieces of wood together, was no carpenter.* I will, however, put your knowledge of arrangement to the test. The words man, horse, gold, tree, bird, and fish, belong to the same grammatical class; can you ascertain any common resemblance?

G. Yes; all these words are alike in one respect. They are *the names* of things.

P. Very well. The grammatical class of words called Nouns, is founded on their resemblance in this, that *they are all names.* Therefore, such words as, courage, honour, virtue, memory, anger, reflection, being the names given to feelings, principles of action, or states of the mind, belong to the same class. The definition of a Noun is "the name of any thing that exists, or of which we have any notion."

G. Then I am to understand that all names of things constitute one class of words, called nouns. Why not called names?

P. *Noun* means name. The words sweet, sour, ugly, pretty, high, low, belong all to one class. In what respect are they alike?

G. You seem to have selected pairs as unlike as possible. Yet there is one point of resemblance, all of them denote quality; for a thing may be sweet or sour, ugly or pretty, high or low.

P. That is true; all words, then, in which the point of resemblance is the expression of a quality, belong to one class, called Adjectives.

G. I suppose that all the words in language are divided into classes, founded on some point of resemblance.

* See note C, at the end of the book.

P. Yes; on resemblance in general signification. You will find that the words in our language are divided by Mr. Murray into nine classes; the names of which are, the Article, the Noun, the Adjective, the Pronoun, the Verb, the Adverb, the Preposition, the Conjunction and the Interjection.* By comparing a few words in each class, you will discover the point of resemblance on which their classification is founded. For more particular information in regard to the words in each class, and its sub-divisions, I refer you to the grammar. That part of the grammar which treats of the classification of words, the changes which are made in them, and the manner in which words are formed out of other words to answer all the purposes of speech, is called Etymology or Analogy. An accurate list of all the words in any language, accompanied by all their received significations, so arranged as most to aid the memory and the power of recollection, would better deserve the name of Etymology.

G. I know, and use a great many words already.

P. So far as you are acquainted with them and can use them rightly, so far are you an Etymologist. For, although you have not yet learned the technical terms, you could not speak intelligibly, or understand what is said to you without considerable knowledge of this part of the grammar. I will intentionally make some mistakes in words and their use, and if you can correct the errors, it will prove that you are not ignorant of the subject, although you may not be able to give reasons for your corrections.

G. Well, sir, make the mistakes if you please, for I am anxious to know if there really is a grammar in any part of my head.

P. George, how many *mans* were at the court-house to-day?

G. ha, ha! I don't know, sir; I did not count *him*.

* Quinctilian c. 4th, l. 1st, De partibus orationis.

P. Come, sir, this is not correcting me.

G. Why father, to say *mans* when you meant *men* is so ridiculous, that I thought I would keep up the ball a little, by using *him* for *them.*

P. But why was it ridiculous to say *mans?*

G. Because you meant *more than one.* You should have said *men.*

P. It seems, then, that you are acquainted with what is called *the number* of Nouns. *One thing,* or *one collection* of things, is said to be of *the singular number,* as a man, a multitude; more than one *plural,* as men, multitudes.

G. I understand this very well.

P. Your little brother John, is sleeping on the carpet; don't wake *her.*

G. You should have said *him.*

P. Why?

G. Because my brother John is not a girl.

P. It is also evident that you are already acquainted with the distinctions of gender, although you may not have been informed that all male animals are, by the grammarians, said to be of the *masculine gender;* females of the *feminine gender,* and things without life of the *neuter gender.*

G. It does not seem to be wrong to say of a gun, "she shoots well."

P. We often speak of inanimate objects as if they had life, or the properties of living creatures. We say of a ship, *she* bounds lightly over the waves; of a rose, *she* is the queen of flowers; of time, *he* mows down all that live. We sometimes call a man a lion or a goose.

G. I should not like to be called a goose.

P. If you can tell me why you would not like to be called a goose, and will reflect a little, I am persuaded you will readily discover why inanimate objects are spoken of as if they had life, and consequently gender.

G. Why, to call me a goose, is no very round-about way of calling me a fool.

P. How so?

G. Because a goose is a foolish animal. I understand it now; there is a classification made. When a point of resemblance is discovered between an inanimate object or an animal, and any person or thing, we can class them together, making the perceived resemblance the basis of our classification, and we then speak of the one as possessing the properties of the other.*

P. You are right. The boy is foolish—the goose is foolish; alike in folly, we apply to both the term indicating the trait of likeness. The gender of inanimate objects depends on some observed resemblance which the object is supposed to bear to males or females. The same object in some respect may resemble a male, and in some other, a female; the same object is, therefore, classed with males in one language, and not unfrequently with females in another. A man *mows* the grass; time *mows* men. They are both mowers; we class them and apply the word *he* to either. The rose is magnificent in dress and exquisite in perfume, and from the voluptuous inhabitants of the East, receives little less adoration than is paid to Princes.

G. And *it* is called *the queen* of flowers. I recollect that in the Scriptures, even the glory of Solomon's array, is said to have been less splendid than that of the lilies of the field: "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."

P. I hope you now understand what is intended when we attribute by any expression, gender to inanimate things. This mode of expression and many others are called *figures of speech.*

* See note D, at the end of the book

G. Yes, I do; when a statesman is compared to a pillar, or a College is called a kind mother, or an alma mater, as Doctor D— called Yale College yesterday, we mean to express the likeness of the pillar and the man, one *supporting* an edifice, the other *supporting* the State; and the likeness of a mother in educating and cherishing her children, to a College performing the same offices for the students. Such expressions are figurative.

P. Very well; we will now proceed in our mistakes. Your brother John has finished his nap, and *him* wants you to play with him.

G. You should have said, "*he* wants me to play with him."

P. Why should I not say *him wants?* A-while-ago when I called John *her*, you corrected me and justly observed, that I should have said *him*, and now you will not allow me to use the word *him* before "*wants*," yet you make no objection to the use of *him* after the word *with*. You said it should be "*he wants*" and "*with him*."

G. Yes, I did; and I know that both the *he* and *him* mean John. Yet I do not know why in the one case it is right to call John *he*, and in the other *him*, unless because it sounds wrong to me.

P. Why should it sound wrong to you?

G. I am not accustomed to hear the words so used. I know of no other reason. It sounds very odd. I have never heard any person say "*him wants*," till you just now made use of that expression.

P. Well, George, what you have now said of custom, may serve not only as a grammatical lesson, but as a moral one to you. If what you are not used to, seems odd and wrong, how carefully should you avoid the use of what is wrong in language, in thoughts, in actions, that it may forever seem wrong? How constantly should you speak and think and act rightly, not only because it is right, but that it

may also have the advantage of seeming right? You will not then slide unconsciously, from right to wrong.

G. I have never before thought so much of the force of custom.

P. Impress it deeply on your mind; it is a truth of vast importance. Shakespeare, whose writings have astonished and delighted the world, whose knowledge of human nature was wonderfully accurate and extensive, says of custom:

> "That monster custom, who all sense doth eat,
> Of habits evil, is *Angel* yet in *this*,
> That to the *use* of actions, fair and good,
> He likewise gives a frock or livery
> *That aptly is put on:*
> For use can almost change the stamp of nature,
> And master even the Devil, or *throw him out*
> With wondrous potency."

If such is our nature, *that use of words* to which you are accustomed will seem right, and combinations of words to which you are not accustomed will seem wrong.

G. Those, then, who speak incorrectly are, or have been accustomed to hear others do it.

P. Certainly; children learn to speak the language which they hear spoken, and no other, and they speak it as they hear it spoken. You speak English. It is called your mother tongue, because you learned it from your mother.

G. How, then, *can I* speak incorrectly if I use words as other people use them?

P. You never will, if you use them as welle ducated people do, when they are attending carefully to what they are saying. But this question of yours renders it necessary that I should explain to you the meaning of the word grammar. I had intended to defer it for some time longer; but, in our next conversation I shall attempt it.

DIALOGUE THE 3d.

G. In our last conversation you promised to explain to me the meaning of the word grammar.

P. Grammar is the history of the customary use of language, as it is spoken and written by the most reputable authors of the age. The arrangements, classifications, rules and observations, are the work of the grammarian, who is the historian of language; and although these may vary or differ according to the views, the information, and the intellectual powers of each grammarian; yet, as in faithful histories of every thing else, the facts are stated and are the principal matter of information. If we attend to the facts, we shall acquire the knowledge necessary to arrive at just conclusions. By reading any history in which the facts are clearly detailed and judiciously arranged, we can acquire, in *a shorter time*, more knowledge than we could obtain by making the collection of facts from various sources, and by classing and comparing them unassisted by the labour of others.

G. You said that "grammar is the history of the customary use of language, as it is spoken and written by the most reputable authors *of the age.*" Is language affected by time?

P. Yes; a grammar of language, as it was spoken and written five hundred years ago, would differ as much from a grammar of the language as it is now spoken and written, as the history of England five hundred years ago differs from the history of England at this time. One writer tells us that "grammar is the art of speaking and writing correctly." Another, that it is "a series of observations up-

on a language reduced to a system, by which one may learn to write and speak according to approved custom." What the one means by "*correctly*," the other expresses by "*according to approved custom.*" The books called grammars, are nothing more than the histories of these approved customs; and the rules of grammar are nothing more than general truths, deduced from the consideration of many particulars, which we may, therefore, apply to all those particulars, when they occur in our own speaking or writing.

G. What! as my mother makes a pudding by the receipt in the cookery book?

P. Yes; for that receipt is the history of a pudding made *before* the receipt; and your mother uses the receipt in order to make her pudding like the first, of the making of which the receipt is the history. The receipt saves her the trouble and risk of experiment.

G. Grammar is, indeed, a very different thing from what I had supposed it to be. I had heard it said that we must learn it in order to write and speak correctly; and I therefore thought that grammar governed language, and turned and twisted and moulded it at pleasure—that it is a standard by which language is to be tried.

P. So, many older and wiser persons than you, have thought and written too. Among these, Dr. Swift, some of whose works you have read, speaking of his own language says, that "*in many instances it offends against every part of grammar.*" But, if we reflect justly, we must conclude, that the rules or receipts for speech and writing, could be obtained from no other sources than speech and writing themselves, and could be nothing but the collected methods used in speaking and writing.*

* "Non ratione nititur analogia, sed exemplo; nec lex est loquendi *sed observatio*: ut ipsam analogiam *nulla res alia* fecerit, quam consuetudo."
Quinctilian.

G. So, then, a grammar only saves us the labour of collecting and comparing words and their uses, that we may use them *as they are used* in the books out of which the grammarian had collected them.

P. Exactly; Doctor Campbell, a learned and sensible writer, who had devoted much time to the study of language, gives us his opinion in these words: "Every tongue whatever, is founded in use or custom. Language is purely *a species of fashion*, in which by the general, but tacit consent of the people of a particular state or country, certain sounds come to be appropriated to certain things, as their signs, and certain ways of inflecting and combining those sounds, come to be established as denoting the relations which subsist among the things signified. *It is not the business of grammar, to give law to the fashions which regulate our speech. On the contrary, from its conformity to these, and from that alone, it derives all its authority and value.*"*

G. A person, then, who speaks or writes incorrectly, is not in the fashion?

P. Certainly not in *the polite fashion.*

G. I know some young gentlemen who imagine that they are on *the very tip of the mode*, who would be greatly mortified and degraded if their pretensions were brought to this test.

P. Although a young gentleman's dress may be entirely fashionable, if his conversation or writing be a beggarly combination of ragged patches, or of "broken legs and wings of words," he is ridiculously and pitiably unfashionable.

G. I feel now well assured, from what you have said of grammar, that if you and my mother speak grammatically, *I mean according to approved custom*, I am not wholly ignorant of it.

* Philosophy of Rhetoric, lib. 2d, c. 1st.

P. You will then proceed with more confidence in your corrections, and perhaps you can now give a reason why I ought to have said "he wants you to play with him," instead of "him wants."

G. "He wants" is a connexion of words in accordance with approved custom, and therefore, grammatical; "him wants" is contrary to approved custom, and therefore, not grammatical.

P. Very well; would you, in speaking of John's hat, say that "it is *he's?*"

G. No; I would say *his.*

P. Of Mary's bonnet, would you say *she's?*

G. No; *hers.*

P. And I suppose you would give the same reason for all these corrections; that before the corrections, approved custom was violated. Would you call more than one *mouse, mouses?*

G. No; *mice.*

P. Would you say that a peach is *gooder* than an apple?

G. I would say, *better* than an apple.

P. In many of these cases there is no such word in the language, approved by custom; and therefore, such sounds are not parts of the language. Words rightly connected constitute language. All the parts you know, make the whole, and the whole can be nothing more than all the parts.

G. I suppose, then, as a person who articulates and spells rightly is said to understand Orthography, so one who uses no words but those which are approved parts of the language, is said to be acquainted with Etymology or Analogy.

P. He will not violate Etymology, though he may not know all the words in the language. But unless he is acquainted with all of them, he cannot be called a perfect Etymologist.

G. I understand you; a person to be perfectly acquainted with this part of grammar, must know all the words in

the language, as Mr. Bond said we must know all the current money, if we deal with brokers.

P. Very true, otherwise we may receive counterfeit and clipped money. Though there is not much danger of our receiving any *with additions*, as we might, from ignorance, receive and use current words with uncurrent additions to them.

G. It must require much time to make so many acquaintances.

P. The time and labour are much abbreviated by arranging them in classes. You know the verb *to love* is said to be a regular verb, and that all regular verbs are conjugated alike. If, therefore, you learn the variations and changes of this one verb *to love*, you become acquainted with the variations and changes of all regular verbs, and there are in every regular verb many words which have received the collective name of *Verb*. Another illustration will make this plain to you. The word *rider*, means *one who rides;* eater, *one who eats.* There are many words formed by adding *r* or *er*, to verbs; from a few examples we ascertain the effect produced by adding these terminations, and then have no difficulty with words of similar formation, such as examiner, hater, driver, &c.

G. In thinking on the errors which I have been correcting, it has occurred to me, that there were two sorts or classes of errors.

P. State, with as much precision as you can, the circumstances of resemblance in those which seem to you of one kind; and also, in the errors of the other kind.

G. The one sort of errors seems to me to consist in the use of words, or rather sounds, unusual to me, which you say are not parts of the language; and, therefore, not words at all. The other sort of errors consists in something that I can't find out, and not in the use of *these no words.* For you, and every body, I believe, use the words, and yet there is error somewhere in the sentence.

P. If you recollect an example of this last sort, repeat it.

G. I recollect one which made the thought about two sorts of errors come into my mind. It is, "your brother John has finished his nap, and *him wants* you to play with him."

P. I am pleased that you have thought so justly in distinguishing these classes of errors. There are indeed two kinds. In the one, the error as you discovered, consists in the use of *sounds* for words, which sounds are not words, approved by good custom; and, therefore, are not parts of the language, such as *he's, she's, gooder, mouses.* The error is alike in all—they are not parts of the language. They, therefore, constitute one class of errors entirely different from that class of which the example, repeated by you, is an instance. For, in it there are no words but such as are usual and approved; yet there is an error which you detected.

G. I was certain that it was not right to put *him* before wants, in the sentence, though I could give no reason but this, that it sounded wrong to me.

P. You gave that answer before I explained the meaning of the word grammar; but, after that explanation, you said something more.

G. I recollect it now; I said "*him wants*" is *a connexion* of words contrary to approved custom, and "*he wants*" according to it.

P. Think on what you have said, and you will discover it implies, that something other than the want of approved words constituted the error—that custom in language may be violated, although none but right words are used, and all the right one's are used.

G. I have ascertained it. *The error is in the connexion,* not in the words.

P. Right; you have now discovered another important truth—that custom not only requires certain words, but

also certain connexions or arrangements of them; that is, certain words only should be put with other certain words. "*Him*" is *a word*, but not *the right word* to put with "*wants*" to express what was intended. You can now, perhaps, tell me the meaning of a word which you have used several times to-day, and which you would not have been able to define, had you been requested to do it.

G. What word is it?

P. The word *sentence*.

G. It means what is said or written, I suppose.

P. And *how ought what is said or written*, to be said or written?

G. According to approved custom.

P. Very well.

G. A sentence, then, is a connexion of words according to approved custom.

P. It is; and the history of the approved connexions of words, is that part of the general history, or grammar, of language, called Syntax, or the third part of grammar.

DIALOGUE THE 4th.

G. May I now ask you, sir, how many divisions there are, of grammar, the general history of language? Three have already been mentioned.

P. I will answer your question in a common, though rather impolite way, by putting another to you; not, however, with the common intention to gain time, or to ascertain the bearings of your question, but to set you to thinking. Will you reflect a little, and inform me what are the subjects of the three divisions, on which we have already conversed?

G. The first division called Orthography, treats of the elementary sounds of the letters, their signs, and of the combinations of these, forming syllables and words. The second, called Etymology or Analogy, is a history of all the words in the language; including, I suppose, their classification, derivation and meaning. The third, called Syntax, gives an account of the approved connexions of words in sentences.

P. Now, George, if you were writing a general history of your mother tongue, is there nothing besides what these divisions comprehend, which you would think yourself bound, as a faithful historian, to relate of the language as it is spoken or written, either in prose or verse?

G. Why, I suppose, sir, that there are the same words only in the language, whether written in prose or verse, made of the same articulate sounds, and connected according to the laws of custom. These laws I should consider under the Syntax division, if I understand what you have

said in regard to resemblance, and classification its consequence.

P. Still, there must be something in poetry, not like prose. For if there is not, why should we have these two classes, prose and poetry? There must, you know, be some trait of resemblance in all prose, and also in all poetry, which serve to distinguish them; otherwise, these general terms of distinction would never have been invented and applied.

G. It cannot be rhyme, for in some very sweet poetry there is no rhyming. Indeed some of the *sweetest* poetry I have ever *heard*, you read in Milton's Paradise Lost, which is written in blank verse, I believe. Is it not?

P. Yes, it is. If you will reflect a little on what you have said of the *sweetness of poetry*, and tell me what you mean when you apply the epithet sweet, to poetry, and not to prose, I think you will add another, and not an inconsiderable division, to the general history of language. In what respect is poetry sweeter than prose?

G. In *sound*. There is almost *music* in poetry.

P. Indeed there is my boy;

> "Such it is,
> As are those dulcet sounds in break of day,
> That creep into the dreaming lover's ear;
> O! it comes o'er my ear like the sweet south
> Stealing and giving odour."

And is there not music too in prose? Does it all, like Pope's "Sir Richard, rumbling, rough and fierce:"

> "Rend with tremendous sounds your ears asunder,
> With gun, drum, trumpet, blunderbus and thunder."

Listen to the prose which I will repeat in language which you do not understand, that you may attend to the sounds only:

"Bienaventurados los pòbres en espiritu, porque de ellos es el reyno de los cielos; bienaventurados los tristres, porque ellos recibirán consolacion."

"Saxa et solitudines voci respondent; bestiæ sæpe immanes cantu flectuntur, atque consistunt: Nos instituti rebus optimis, non poetarum voce moveamur?

G. There is music in almost every word. I wish I understood the meaning. The "sweet consent of sense and sound" would be delightful.

P. You would enjoy it much more; but you should not apply the word music, to the melody of single words; that term seems to belong to a composition of sounds.*

G. You have said enough to convince me, that my general history of language would have been very defective, without a division, devoted to the sound of words, and the music which may be infused into compositions, both in poetry and prose. What is the name, given by grammarians, to this part of the history of language?

P. Prosody. And it not only treats of the sound and pronunciation of the words, and the various combinations of them in poetry of different kinds and measure, calculated to excite emotions through the medium of the ear, but of the approved customary emphasis, accent, and even pauses or intervals in pronunciation, and the length of time proper in uttering words, and parts of words, corresponding with what is called time, in musical compositions, or tunes. In addition to the pleasure which we derive from the music of language, great advantages are obtained from Prosody, in construing difficult passages, in ascertaining obliterated words in manuscripts, and in correcting errors of the press, or the interpolations of ignorant commentators. If a wrong note is put into a tune, or a note is wanting, a musician will detect it from the *discord*. So in poetical composition, discord in sense or sound leads the Prosodist to suspect that the original composition has been altered,

* Alison on Taste, p. 144.

or some part of it lost; and he is frequently enabled to supply the defect, or to expunge the superfluous interpolation.

G. Will you illustrate this by a few examples?

P. Willingly. I will first quote a passage or two from several writers, and then leave out, or change some of the original words:

* "As gentle Sheapheard in sweet eventide,
When ruddy Phebus gins to welke in west,
High on an hill his flock to vewen wide,
Markes which doe byte their hasty supper best."

In the first line, change the word "eventide" into evening; in the second, "ruddy" into red; in the third, "vewen" into view; and in the fourth, "supper" into meal.

G. It produces horrible discord. Any person who had read any of Spencer's works would not only suspect, but feel confident that he never wrote thus.

P.

"Such applause was heard
As Mammon ended; and his sentence pleased
Advising peace: for such another field
They dreaded worse than Hell: so much the fear
Of thunder, and the sword of Michael
Wrought still within them; and no less desire
To found this nether empire, which might rise
By policy, and long *procĕss* of time,
In emulation opposite to Heaven;
Which when Bēēlzebub perceived, than whom
Satan except, none higher sat, with grave
Aspĕct he rose, and in his rising seem'd
A pillar of state."†

G. If the words "process" and "aspect" only be pronounced as they are at the present day, placing the accent on the first syllable of each, instead of the last, what a change will be produced!

* Spencer's Faerie Queene, Canto 1st.
† Milton's Paradise Lost.

P.

"Come and trip it as you go
On the light fantastic toe,
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph sweet *liberty;*
And if I give thee honour due
Mirth! admit me of thy crew,
To live with her and live with thee
In *unreprovéd* pleasures free"*

If the words "fantastic, sweet, honour, pleasures" were lost, or their places supplied by other words of different measure, how quickly our ears would detect it. Even if the word *unreprovéd* were printed *unreprov'd*, we should instantly perceive that it was erroneous.

G. It is manifest that the syllable "*ed*," at the end of unreproved must be fully pronounced without contraction.

P.

"When all the rest began to admire
And like a train from him took fire,
Surprised with wonder béforehand
At what they did not understand,
Cried out impatient to know what
The matter was they *wonder'd* at."†

G. In this example the words *surpris'd* and *wonder'd*, are contracted, and the word *béforehand* must be accented on the first syllable, instead of the second.

P. These few examples will, I hope, induce you to give a proper portion of your attention to Prosody. To understand the division of poetry into metrical feet, is not only necessary to the full enjoyment of this species of composition in regard to sound, but to the successful investigation of the author's meaning, when the license of poetical arrangement may render it ambiguous or obscure. We have now taken a cursory view of the four divisions of the

* Milton's L'allegro.
† Butler's Elephant in the Moon.

Grammar,—Orthography, Etymology, Syntax, and Prosody. These are sub-divided for the sake of arrangement, to abridge the labour of the learner, and to assist him in remembering and recollecting the particulars arranged.

G. I do not exactly understand how this assistance is rendered.

P. In our next conversation I shall, perhaps, say something on that subject.

DIALOGUE THE 5th.

P. I have already informed you that resemblance is the basis on which all classification rests. Its utility is not confined to the study of language, but extends to that of all the sciences. The relations which connect all the arts and sciences are so close and numerous, that it is almost impossible to possess an accurate knowledge of any one of them, without acquiring some general ideas of many others. You will hereafter find, that the principles by which you will be aided in the acquisition of grammatical information, are very general in their application. I shall, therefore, say a good deal about them. If they are well understood in relation to any one object of study, they are easily applied to all other subjects to which the mind may be subsequently directed.

G. I am glad to hear this, as it must save both time and labour.

P. I must tell you though, at the outset, you are not to conclude that the classifications made by writers on language, are the best, or the only ones of which the subject is susceptible, or that the general terms denoting their classes and sub-divisions, are the most appropriate which might have been invented to designate them. The consideration of the correctness of their classifications, and of the propriety of their general terms, is not, at this time, so important to you, as that you should be well acquainted with the classifications and terms now used. Because, on this, as well as other subjects, you must derive a great part of the information, which I hope you will possess, from *what has been written.* You must, therefore, become acquainted with the arrangements and general terms of the writers. And notwithstanding the want of logical accuracy in the classifications, and the unphilosophical terms with which you will meet, yet by the aid of these instruments you can acquire more knowledge in a short time, than you could unaided by them, in your whole life.

G. I should like, though, to have some notion of what is right in these things, that I may make such arrangements, and use such terms as may seem best to myself, and that I may have the means of forming a judgment how far, and in what direction, they have gone wrong. Perhaps, then, even their errors may prevent me from wandering far astray. Do you recollect what Mr. Pole, the surveyor, said about one of the out-lines of your land when he was here?

P. No. What did he say?

G. Why, he said that the contrary errors of the preceding surveyors, had enabled him to find the true line very easily.

P. The observation of your friend, Mr. Pole, seems to render it unnecessary, George, that I should tell you where the true line is, as you might, perhaps, find it as he did.

G. Yes sir; but I have not the knowledge which he had, by which to ascertain where *they are wrong*, and if their errors were contrary, I might suppose that one was right and the other wrong; and yet, might not be able to find out which; when in truth it might be, that both were wrong.

P. You take so little time to think, that you use words without attending to their meaning. How could you find out which was right, and which wrong if both were wrong? This would be a step beyond Mr. Pole, I think.

G. I meant that I should not be able to have any *correct opinion* which of them might be right, and that although such opinion were formed, it would be groundless; because, not being sufficiently well acquainted with the subject, I might have one which seemed to me right, and the other wrong, when in truth, both were wrong.

P. All three, I think.

G. What three, papa?

P. Yourself, and the two, of whose errors you formed an opinion, without good grounds for one.

G. I understand you. But I was not born among those who have *no opinions*,* and no word in their language to express what we call by that name.

P. Doctor Swift's satire is not undeserved, by those who venture to form opinions, on subjects of which they are ignorant. I hope, that before you have any, or even think that you *have a right* to any, you will examine with great care, the grounds on which they are to rest; and weigh with impartiality, all the circumstances attending their formation. But, let us return to our subject.

G. Very willingly, sir; and, I promise not to take you off surveying again, as you run your lines so much on the only freehold I possess; my opinions.

* Gulliver's Travels.

P. I dare say it would be well, for you are unable to defend such an estate, upon a writ of right, as the lawyers say, and may therefore be dispossessed. However, there are many freeholders, with no better title, whose possession, so far from being disturbed, is respected.

G. Let us proceed, if you please.

P. Well, as you wish it, I will give you *my opinion* of correct and logical classification.

G. Say nothing of *opinion*, if you please, sir, but tell me what you *think*, which, although it may be nothing more than *opinion*, will not produce the disagreeable feelings which have become connected in my mind, with that word.

P. That connexion, if you can ascertain how it has been formed, between a mere word, and feelings of which it is not the sign, will at once teach you much in regard to the uses of classification, and of the principles on which, things come to be so connected, that when we think of one thing, others come unbidden into the mind. After we have conversed on the formation of classes,* I shall say something of their uses, when the recollection of this connexion may assist you.

I shall as usual, instead of merely stating what I have thought, attempt to lead you to the discovery of that which you wish to know. Because, what we find out ourselves

* "The relation of *resemblance* by the general notions, and corresponding general terms that flow from it, we found to be the *source* of *classification, and definition*, and of *all* that is *valuable* in *language*. The *process is in itself sufficiently simple*, and if we had never heard of any controversies, with respect to it, we probably could not have suspected that the mere giving a name to resemblances, which all perceive, and the subsequent application of the name, only where the resemblance is felt, should have been thought to have any thing in it more mysterious, than the mere giving a name to the separate objects which all perceive, and the repetition of that name, when the separate objects are again perceived." *Brown's Philosophy of the Human Mind, lecture 46th.*

This quotation shews the relation of the subject to language, and its adaptation from its simplicity to the comprehension of my pupil.

or with little assistance from others, is more apt to be remembered, and we acquire by this kind of exertion, the habit of investigation and discovery. Suppose there were any objects, so exactly alike that *no difference* could be perceived, could we divide them into classes? Would they not all necessarily belong to one class?

G. They would. And, indeed, if we were to see but *one* of them *at a time*, it seems to me, that all thus seen, would be taken for one and the same.

P. They could not, then, produce the idea of *difference*, without which, all things would necessarily be of one class. Could any error in reasoning, result from the use of the name of the class, as the sign either of an individual in the class, or of all contained in it?

G. I think not; as there would be no difference in any of the individuals, all that could be said of any one, would be equally true of all.

P. Suppose there were other objects so very similar to these, that only one point of difference could be perceived, and all these last objects possessed that point of difference.

G. I could, then, have two classes, distinguished by that difference?

P. And the name of this last class might be used in our reasoning, as the sign of one or all included in it, without subjecting us to error.

G. Yes; and all that could be said of the one class would be true of the other, if we *add* to what is said of the first, *the difference distinguishing* the second from it.

P. But, if through ignorance or want of attention to the existing difference, you were to put some of one class into the other?

G. The arrangement would be wrong, and consequently if I used the name of the class as the sign of all in it, my reasonings would be incorrect. For the same affirmations would not be true of one and all, in consequence of *the*

difference existing in some of the individuals, improperly included in the class.*

P. Very well; you understand, then, that such classification would be incorrect.

G. Yes, I do; and I plainly perceive the circumstance necessary to what you denominate a logical classification. All the individuals included in a class, should possess all the traits of resemblance on which the classification is founded.

P. And what should the name of the class be the *sign* of?

G. Of the common traits of resemblance; and we might safely use it as denoting them in our reasonings.

P. You are right; and, if the common sense which has conducted you to this simple truth, had governed the classifications and general terms of many writers, more than half of the controversies which have perplexed and embroiled the literary world, would never have existed.

G. I have never seen *two objects* in all respects exactly alike.

P. Therefore, it is, that our reasoning in *regard to classes*, must be confined to those points in which all the individuals included in a class, resemble each other. And because, so few objects resemble each other in many points, those classes which require most points of resemblance, will contain the smallest number of individuals; and each ascending class, in which fewer points of resemblance are required, will comprehend a greater number of individuals.

G. Until at last, we come to the highest class, in which but one point of resemblance can be perceived. This, it seems to me, would include all things, and therefore, would be no class at all.

* "And it consists in this, that we believe the idea in which we perceive a new element, to be *the same* as that we have always had under the *same sign*, when it is *really different*. So that, to avoid contradiction, we must either take away the former, or not admit the latter." *Elements of Ideology, by Destutt Tracy.*

P. Why so?

G. Because, there would be nothing left out of it, from which these "*all things*" differed.

P. You will now easily comprehend what is meant by the power of considering certain qualities or attributes of an object, apart from the rest.* This power of the mind, is called *abstraction*.

G. When I think of a quality in which several things resemble each other, without thinking of their other qualities; as when I think of the blackness in ink, in a hat, in marble, without regarding the other qualities of these things, the idea which I have, is called an abstract idea.

P. Yes, it is. I will now read to you a passage from Doctor Andrew's Logic, on the subject of our present conversation, which, I hope, you are prepared to understand. "An abstract universal, or as it is more commonly called a general idea, is an idea that will apply to several individuals, or to several classes of individuals. If it apply to individuals only, the class which corresponds to it, and comprehends individuals, is termed a Species: if to several classes of individuals, the class which corresponds to it, and comprehends these several classes of individuals, is termed a Genus. The formation of these ideas depends on a power which the mind possesses, of *removing* from its idea of any object, *what is peculiar* to that object; from its idea of an individual, whatever is peculiar to that individual; and from its idea of a species, whatever is peculiar to that species; a power, which, by the writers on the human mind, is called the faculty of abstraction.† But, that this may be better understood, it will be worth while to take a more distinct view of the process of the understanding, in the formation of these ideas. All the things in nature are individual things: that is, every thing is itself, and *one*, and not ano-

* See note B, at the end of the book.

† I think there is *no abstraction* in the process of generalization.

ther, and more than one. But when we come to take a view of the several individuals, and observe that a number of them resemble each other in one or more particulars of importance, selecting the particulars in which they agree, and removing all those in which they disagree, we frame to ourselves a general idea applicable to several individuals: that is, to a particular species. Thus, certain animals being found to resemble each other in having an erect form, and in being endowed with the faculties of reason and speech, we take these important particulars which are common to them all, and excluding what is peculiar to each, we form a *general idea* to which we give the name of man: and this name belongs equally to every individual, who is possessed of the form and faculties above-mentioned. This is the first step or gradation in the forming of abstract ideas when the mind confines itself to the consideration of individuals, and frames an idea that comprehends such only under it. Again, having ranged things into species, according to the resemblance found among them, we begin to compare the several species with each other, and often observe in these, also, a resemblance in one or more particulars of importance. Upon this, throwing out all the particulars in which they disagree and retaining those only in which there is a resemblance, we frame a still more general idea, comprehending under it several species: thus, a sparrow, a hawk, an eagle, &c. are distinct species of birds; they nevertheless resemble each other in being covered with feathers, and provided with wings, which bear them through the air. *Out of these particulars*, we form a new idea, and appropriating to it the name *bird*, mark by that word, a higher class which comprehends in it all the former. This higher class which extends to several species of things, is called a *Genus*, and is the second step which the mind takes, in the formation of its general ideas. But, in rising from particulars to generals,

the mind does not confine itself to one or two gradations: for when we have reduced things into species, and species into genera, these genera are often found to resemble each other in some particulars, which being combined together into one idea, includes a new and more comprehensive class of things. Thus, bird is a genus, comprehending the several species of sparrow, hawk, eagle, &c. Fish is a genus, including the several species of living creatures which inhabit the waters, as dolphin, sturgeon, &c. Beast or quadruped, and insect, are also genera, which extend to many species: yet all these different genera have *this* in common, that they are provided with organical bodies, fitted for the purposes of life and spontaneous motion. An idea, therefore, made up of *these particulars only*, will comprehend all the genera above-mentioned, and the word *animal*, by which it is expressed, denotes a higher genus, including the several creatures endowed with life, sense and spontaneous motion: Further, all things, animate and inanimate, resemble each other in this respect, that *they are created:* whence, we refer them to a genus still higher, which may be called creature; a name which belongs equally to every genus and species of created things, and to each individual thing that is created: and further still, all things whatever *exist* or *are*, and in this respect are said to resemble each other; in which view, we refer them to a genus still higher, called being, which is the highest possible genus."

G. I think that I now understand the nature and principles of classification, and what is meant by *abstraction;* or, as it seems to me, *the disregard* of every thing in objects but their traits of resemblance, to which traits we give a name.

P. And denominate the state of mind produced by the observance of these traits, or by the occurrence of the name invented as their sign, an abstract idea. In our next conversation, I shall say something of *the uses* of *classification.*

DIALOGUE THE 6th.

P. I should not have introduced the subjects of classification and abstraction, unless I well knew that you, and every one of your age are often engaged in these operations of the mind, although ignorant of their names; and unless I believed, that *an explanation* of them was as well adapted to your age and the developement of your faculties, as the operations themselves.* In all grammars, words will be presented to your consideration, *not individually*, but *by classes.* You could not, therefore, without a general knowledge of this subject applied to language, be able to know the extent, or appreciate justly, the value of the information to be derived from grammars. When we are informed that any word is a Noun, or an Adjective, or a Verb, that is, belongs to one of the classes thus named, what is the amount of information which we receive?

G. Not its individual import or meaning, not *its peculiarities*, not *its differences* from other words; but the point or points of resemblance only, on which the classification is founded, common to it and all other words included in the same class.

P. Very true. You would not know of what individual *thing* or *thought* it is the sign, or whether it is a simple sign of one thing, or a compound of signs representing many things, and without all this knowledge, *none of which is conveyed by its generic name*, you could not understand it in the discourse of others, or venture to use it yourself, in

* "General reasonings *seem intricate, merely* because they are general."
Hume's Political Discourses.

speech or writing: *and these are the only practicable purposes of utility, which we have in view in studying the history of language.*

G. It seems to me, that if we knew nothing more of words than what we derive from the name of their class, we could express nothing more by them than their general points of resemblance; and as all in the class possess these, any one in the class would answer the purposes of all in it. To know that *fire* and *water*, courage and cowardice, are Nouns; or that to *love*, and to *hate*, are Verbs, is to know but little, indeed, of their nature and uses.

P. Yet this little wonderfully facilitates the acquisition of all that is necessary to be known, if rightly applied.

G. I am very anxious to learn all that is necessary, both to understand others, and to express what I wish to say or write in the best manner: that is, as sensible and well informed people do.

P. Well, George, with study and persevering exertion, you will succeed. For, whatever has been done, may be done again. And I can assure you, that the exercise of the mind, like that of the body, not only gives health and vigour to it, but becomes agreeable and interesting. I am now attempting to direct your exertions, that they may be effectual. Success gives us pleasure, and pleasure stimulates us to exertion. All that a teacher can do for you, is to direct your labours to their proper objects, and to assist you by their application, to obtain success. Without labour, you can never be a great man, a useful man, a good man, or a happy man. Those who calculate on success in any undertaking, physical or intellectual, from any other cause of production than labour, are moral gamblers, unworthy of success, even if it chance to them.

G. I would labour very hard, rather than be classed with these odious and unprofitable characters.

P. You have observed the use of levers, wheels and other machines, and the great power which we can exert by their help.

G. Yes, I have. With a long stick and a little block of wood, *I can move* a weight that several men could not move by their mere strength, unaided by some mechanical contrivance.

P. It has been said of the use of classification and general terms in language, that "the advantage our animal strength acquires by the use of mechanical engines, exhibits but a *faint image* of that increase of our intellectual capacity which we owe to language,"* and that "the use of general terms enables man to reason well. They fix the steps of our progress; they give us the power of availing ourselves, with confidence, of our own past reasonings, and of the reasonings of others. They do not absolutely prevent us from *wandering*, but they prevent us from wandering very far, and are *marks of direction* to which we can return. Without them, we should be like travellers journeying on an immense plain *without a track*, and without any points on the sky to determine whether we were continuing to move east, west, north or south. We should still be moving, indeed, and each step would be *a progress*, if it were compared merely with the step that went before. But there would be *no long journey onwards:* and, after years of wandering, we might, perhaps, return to the very spot from which we set out, without even so much knowledge as to have the slightest guess that we were again, where we had been before."†

G. I believe we do not love labour *for its own sake*, and this wandering in pursuit of knowledge, without onward progress, would soon tire us; and when we knew that we were lost, we should sit down hopeless, fatigued and disgusted.

* Professor Stewart.
† Professor Brown.

P. *The fate of many a school boy*, who, in his first attempts to explore the field of knowledge, from the *want of a guide, or a little right direction*, as to the *path* he should pursue, loses the way, sits down in desponding idleness, and remains in bewildered apathy, till the *morning of life* is passed, and during the remainder of *his day*, wanders on the wide waste of the world, *forever lost* to himself, to his friends, and to his country.

G. What a picture you have drawn!

P. It is, nevertheless, a true likeness.

G. I hope it will never be mine.

P. That it may not, I am now attempting to direct your steps into the right path, and to give you plain instructions how and whither to advance. For, the right use of language is intimately connected with our knowledge of things; and language, without the use of general terms, would be a feeble instrument. "*To abridge the labour of reasoning and of memory*, by directing the attention to general principles, instead of particular truths, is the professed aim of all philosophy."*

G. From what you said in our last conversation on logical classification, and the use of the general term, or name of the class, for either an individual or all included in the class, and if the classification be correct, the consequent truth of any reasonings as to one, though made about all, and from what you just now quoted in regard to the abridgment of labour in reasoning and in remembering, by the direction of our attention to general principles, it seems to me that we may reason about whole bundles of things, as if they were one individual.

P. Indeed we may, *so far as the name of the class extends.* And we do this from early childhood to the day of our death, and if our bundles as you call them—

G. Classes, I mean.

* Stewart.

P. Well, classes or bundles. If we put nothing into them but what should be there, we may safely use the name of the class, as if it were the name of one individual included in it, and our reasoning will be as correct as if it regarded the individual only, although made about all in the class.

G. And this reasoning is called *general reasoning.*

P. Very true; and the truths which we discover relating to the whole class?

G. Are general truths.

P. Why, this is much shorter work than considering each individual in the class separately, would be, I think.

G. Indeed it is, and these general truths will be bundles of knowledge.

P. Can you remember one thing, or many, more easily?

G. One certainly; and I now understand how classification, and general terms, help the memory.

P. How?

G. They condense our knowledge. By remembering the *name* of the class, and the *general truths* appertaining to it, we are saved the difficult and laborious task of learning and remembering these truths, in regard to thousands of single things which may be contained in the same class, and to each of which, individually, the very same truths apply.

P. We are not only saved from all this labour in remembering so many particulars, but we acquire the means of *recollecting* more easily what we may forget, by merely reflecting in what class the forgotten individual was arranged.

G. I had thought that *remembering* and *recollecting* were the same, but I now know that they are not.

P. Both of them relate to that faculty which we have, to retain and re-possess the knowledge which we have once

acquired. The former retains our knowledge after it is acquired; the latter recovers what the former happens to lose. And if you now remember, or can recollect, what in a former conversation you said about the word Opinion, and the advice which I then gave you in regard to the connexion which was formed in your mind, between a *mere word*, and things or feelings of which that word is *not the sign*, you will much more readily comprehend, how the more natural connexion which classification and general terms produce in our minds, must assist us, both in retaining, and in recollecting our acquisitions.

G. I have no necessity for *recollection* about that word opinion, because I *remember* very well the unpleasant feelings which I then had, and *the word* with which they became connected. *Real resemblance* must form a closer tie, and therefore, classification founded on it, must assist the memory more.

P. Yes; and also the power of recollection. For, by reflecting on the class to which the individual sought for, belongs, the general term, or common name, brings to mind the common resemblances, and these again, present to the mind immediately, so many individuals like the one required, that *it* comes into the mind whether we will or not.*

G. I know it is so; for it has often happened to me, that when I have been trying to think of some *thing* or *name*, and when I felt as if the very shadow of it was touching me, as if it were at my tongue's end, yet I could not grasp it, could not utter it; something else like it would come into my mind, and drag along with it the teasing little fugitive.

P. This connexion of things in the mind or in thought, is called by some writers, *the association of ideas*, and by others, *simple suggestion;* and that faculty of the mind on

* "We do not find them out; they come to us."—*Locke.*

which it depends, is also called either by one of these names, or the *associating* or *suggesting* faculty.*

G. I am glad that I know *the name* of this power of the mind.† That such connexions do take place in my own mind, I well know, and I suppose they do in the minds of all persons.

P. There can be no doubt of the fact. It must, however, be remarked, before we apply what you have been learning of classification, abstraction, and the association of ideas, to the study of language, that "in the actual process of generalizing, we form classes and orders, before we distinguish the *minuter varieties.* We are struck first, with some resemblance of a multitude of objects, perhaps, a very remote one; in consequence of which, we class them together, and we attend *afterwards to the differences* which distinguish them, separating them into genera and species, according to these differences. Every general term which we use, must express indeed, an agreement of some sort that has led us to invent and apply the term. But we may feel one resemblance, without feeling or even suspecting other resemblances as real; and *the very circumstance* of agreement, which we perceive at the time when we class objects together as related, *may involve* or comprehend *certain circumstances,* to which we then paid no attention, and which may occur to us,"‡ only on a more particular examination. Thus, we have much to learn from the circumstance of our classing individuals, before we have examined them minutely; and on such examination, we discover many qualities and relations that we had never suspected to exist, when we classed them.‖ We very often too, attempt to deduce or understand general truths, *before* we have any knowledge of the phenomena.

* " *Grammar,* in its general principles, has a close connexion with the *understanding,* and the theory of the association of ideas." *Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric.*

† See note E, at the end of the book.

‡ Brown.

‖ See note F, at the end of the book.

DIALOGUE THE 7th.

In our last conversation, I mentioned to you the fact, that in classing objects, we are at first struck with some resemblance, and become acquainted with other qualities and minute circumstances of agreement or difference, only after a more particular examination of the individuals. In this examination we discover, that what we conceived to be elements, are themselves, often compound masses. The objects of perception, which are presented to our senses by nature, are masses. This piece of marble, for instance, is not an elementary substance, but a *compound*, belonging to the class of *stone*. On examination, it has been found to be composed of three different sorts of things, *water*, *lime*, and *carbonic acid*. On subjecting one of these three to examination, the carbonic acid, for example, we find it to be a compound, made up of carbon and oxygen. Now, men were acquainted with the mass, called marble, and many uses to which it could be applied, before they knew any thing of its elements. A knowledge of these, has given us the power to use it for purposes to which it had never been applied, while it was considered as a simple substance.

G. You seem to be giving me a lesson in Chymistry, the objects of which I wish to know something about, but did not expect to hear any thing on that subject now.

P. The application of my remarks, will soon be made. It may not be improper, as you wish it, though it is not pertinent to our subject, to inform you, that the object of Chymical experiments is, either to ascertain the elementary

principles composing the compound bodies in nature, or to discover all the existing and possible relations and combinations of these elements, as they exist in nature, and as they may be produced by art, for purposes of utility. The process of decomposing compounds, to ascertain their elements, and to observe the relations of these to each other, and to the mass of which they are constituent parts, is called *Analysis;* and the combination of the elementary principles, in order to form a compound, is called *Synthesis.* As we separate the parts, we not only observe them, but all the circumstances of their connexion with the other parts, and these observations may enable us to discover relations in other compounds, and by Synthetical combinations, to form new ones.

G. If I understand you, when my brother *has built* a bridge with the little blocks which you gave us, and I go to examine it, taking it carefully to pieces, in order to find out what *pieces* he used, and how he used them to form the bridge, *my* process is Analytical. But, when *I* take the blocks, and build a bridge by putting them together, my process is Synthetical.

P. Very well; but these two words, Analysis and Synthesis are not confined to Chymical operations. You just now gave a *mechanical* illustration of their meaning. They are applied to our reasoning processes generally.*

G. If we reason from elements to compounds, our reasoning is Synthetical; if from compounds to elements, Analytical.

P. But before *we can reason* from elements to compounds, we must know something of the elements; and as they are not presented to us in their separate state, we of necessity began with compounds, as things with which we had some acquaintance. And before we had decompo-

* The terms Analysis and Synthesis, are borrowed from the Greek Geometers.

sed a single compound, we could, and did use them in the same way that you use sentences, without being able to give a grammatical analysis of them. But, to have complete command over all the powers of compounds, whether of things or words, implies a knowledge of all their elements, and of all the possible relations of these to each other.

G. In our examination of language, we must proceed, I perceive, either analytically or synthetically—that is, we must either begin with the highest compounds in language, and pull them to pieces until we get at the articulate sounds, or we must begin with these, and put together until we arrive at the highest compounds.

P. I think we should begin with what you are best acquainted with, and of that you shall judge. Did you first hear, and learn to imitate the articulate sounds, of which letters are the signs, in their separate, individual, elementary state?

G. No; words, which are the compounds of these, I learned first.

P. Were you next employed in analysing words, and in ascertaining these elementary sounds, of which they are composed?

G. No, I never thought of it. I next began to connect them together, to tell my wants, and to ask for what I wished; while at the same time they became signs of the things which they represent, in some way that is entirely unknown to me.

P. The connexion between words in common use, and the things of which they are signs, is formed in our minds at so early a period of our existence, and so gradually, that we forget it. I expect, though, that you can tell when the connexion between the word *analysis*, and the process of which it is the sign, was formed in your mind.

G. Yes, indeed; only a few minutes past.

P. Did you, when you were able to speak in sentences, begin to decompose them?

G. I believe not.

P. What then?

G. I began to talk long and loud, and to sing, and to repeat the poetry which I was taught.

P. To repeat, without understanding.

G. Yes, sir.

P. When then, did you begin to analyse language? Was it when you learned the letters?

G. No. So soon as I learned them, I began to build.

P. To build what?

G. Syllables, and words, and sentences, and long pieces, in Mrs. Barbauld's books, in Sandford and Merton, in Evenings at Home, in the Book of Trades, in Miss Edgeworth's books—

P. Stop there, for you cannot stop in better company. It seems, then, that you have been almost exclusively engaged in *combinations*, either in oral or written language.

G. Yes, sir, in building, nothing but building; some times you made me pull down a piece, to put it up better, or to call it by its proper name, when I happened to mistake the pronunciation.

P. If you have been thus employed in synthetical operations, I think you should know something of them.

G. Do I not? Although I knew nothing of the word synthesis, I can talk on several subjects so as to be understood, I hope. I can read, and I can write every thing that I can say.

P. That may be, and yet you are ignorant of the real meaning of many words, which you are in the daily practice of using.

G. Is it possible? Do mention *one*.

P. A dozen, if you please. What are your definitions of *if, for, by, from, but, and, though, yet, as, than, lest, of?*

G. It is too true. I cannot define one of them, and yet it seems to me that I know that *I must know* something about them, or I could not use them so as to be understood.

P. You need not blush so deeply red; many persons are in the same predicament, who think that they are good grammarians. The matter is easily explained to you. You have used that piece of marble, and other compound bodies, without knowing what were the elements in them.

G. Yes, without even suspecting that they were compounds.

P. In the same manner, most people use *sentences* and a vast number of *words.* But they cannot venture on any new combinations. It is the whole, and not the parts, with which they are most intimate.

G. I must, therefore, begin to analyse sentences.

P. Yes, if we are to proceed from the known to the unknown. Besides, as we advance, I hope you will perceive other great advantages to be derived from this method. Imperfect as your knowledge of the language is, we must make it the basis of your analytical investigations. And although your knowledge of language, derived from analysis, may never enable you to determine what is the structure of a whole sentence, from one word contained in it, as "a skilful anatomist, from the appearance of a single bone, can conclude to a certain extent, with respect to the form of the whole skeleton to which it belonged,"* yet, in proportion to your intimate acquaintance with the parts, will be your just conception of the whole, and your power of using the parts, in forming new combinations. You will proceed in composition with more ease, and with that confidence, resulting from knowledge, which inspires courage, and often ensures success. "The grammatical art hath its completion in Syntax," says Dr. Campbell; and I wish you to acquire a practical knowledge of the subject, to be

* Cuvier.

applied to your own speaking and writing. Mere speculative science, which is not the foundation of some useful art, if science it can be called, is not entitled to our attention.*

DIALOGUE THE 8th.

P. All discourse, and all written compositions, consist of sentences. These are, therefore, the compound bodies of the highest class, presented to us in separate masses, in speech and writing. A sentence is "an assemblage of words, forming a complete sense," or a connexion of words according to approved custom, expressing what we feel or think. It is, then, the name of a class, and the trait of resemblance, which the word sentence has been invented to express, belonging in common to all sentences, is the expression of complete sense. But this class, we find, is sub-divided into simple sentences, and compound sentences. There must, then, be in both sub-divisions, the common trait of resemblance, and in one of them, *some circumstance of difference, distinguishing* all the individuals included in it, from all in the other; otherwise, you know, there had been no use for the two general terms, simple and compound, applied to sentences. Their common point of resemblance, you have already been informed, is the complete expression of thought or feeling.

* See note G, at the end of the book.

G. Yes; and our first analysis, must have for its object, the discovery of that circumstance, which constitutes the difference between these two classes: that is, between all simple sentences, and all compound sentences.

P. And when we shall have ascertained this, what then?

G. Why, we have only *to add* it to what we shall find in the class in which it is not, and the analysis of both classes is thus completed.

P. Very well; you now see how the knowledge of classification will lessen our labour, and direct our researches to what we are seeking.

G. Perhaps the definitions will assist us, in discovering the difference.

P. Perhaps they may. "A simple sentence has in it but one subject, and one finite Verb." "A compound sentence consists of two or more simple sentences, connected together."

G. "Connected together?" Then, there must be something to connect them. And as there is nothing in language, but words rightly connected, this *connecting something*, must be a word or words, and must be found in every compound sentence, and cannot be found in any simple sentence.

P. Very well. If these conclusions be correct, by an examination and comparison of simple and compound sentences, we shall discover the word or words, which produce the difference.

G. And to such word or words, I should give the name of *compound sentence-makers*, because without such, the sentence would be a simple sentence; such therefore, must be indispensable to the existence of every compound sentence.

P. Such words have names, by which they are well known already. Our time will be better employed, in ascertaining what words they are. For this purpose, I

have selected several sentences of each class: here they are, arranged and numbered.

*Analysis the first.**

No. 1. Life is short.
2. Art is long.
3. Life is short, *and* art is long.
4. Henry will accomplish his purpose.
5. He is industrious.
6. Henry will accomplish his purpose, *because* he is industrious.
7. His play-fellows love him.
8. He is obliging.
9. His play-fellows love him, *for* he is obliging.
10. Upon one condition I will ride.
11. You must ride with me.
12. I will ride, *if* you will ride with me.
13. James will not sing.
14. John will not sing.
15. Neither James *nor* John will sing.

Compare the 1st and 2d with the 3d, the 4th and 5th with the 6th; and so on through the whole.

* The Synthesis of language, even as it is known to children, produces some vague and indefinite notions of its elements. For, although children do not regularly analyse sentences, and deduce general truths from particulars, like one who has been trained in the *school* of *induction*, yet they do become acquainted with the limited application of many general truths, in language, as well as in natural philosophy. They therefore, use general terms with considerable propriety. If they merely imitated, their sentences would all be *fac similes* of those which they had heard; not variant in a single particular. This is not the fact, as every observer knows. Indeed their early efforts at constructions of their own, out of the unanalysed materials of language, afford *amusement* to all; but to persons of philosophical minds, they furnish important data for the study of our intellectual constitution. It will be obvious to the intelligent reader, that I have commenced the analysis of language with the consideration of connective words, for *logical* reasons; the division of sentences, into simple, and compound, rendering an explanation of the difference produced by the use of connectives, necessary.

G. The 1st and 2d are simple sentences; the 3d is a compound, and the difference between it, and the two preceding, is produced by the word *and*, which must therefore be a connective. "Life is short" is only a connexion of words. "Art is long" is another connexion of words. Each of these connexions of words makes sense, of itself. But "Life is short, *and* art is long," is not only a connexion of words, but a connexion of two chains of words, if I may so express it, each of which was a perfect chain before the introduction of the link *and*, which unites them, and forms a perfect chain with the two parts; but the two parts joined together, and the additional link, form a very different chain from either of the parts.

P. Very well. You observe, that the connexion between the words in the simple sentences, is of a different kind from that which is effected by the word *and*. In them, the connexion of the words made sense only, or expressed thought. But the word *and* connects *expressions* of thought.

G. Indeed it does.

P. Observe its use. If we wish to say something, not about the shortness of life, or the length of art, but about their *joint effect*, this contrivance assists us to accomplish it. A state of mind produced by a compound of thoughts, is thus capable of expression. And many truths may present themselves to the mind, in consequence of that combination, which neither of the combined ideas, separately presented, could ever have introduced.

G. Will you illustrate this?

P. Willingly. The state of the mind produced by the co-existence of thoughts, is termed *a complex thought*, the relations of things to each other, arising in the mind from the things themselves. When I say of John standing on a hill, and William on the plain below, "*I observe their*

position," I mean to express a state of mind produced by John, William, and the relation existing between them, in regard to space, and difference of elevation. A separate and unconnected consideration of John, on the hill, or of William, in the valley, could never have produced that state of the mind expressed by *"I observe their position."* They, and their related state, are presented to me by perception. The mind feels the effect, and words express it. Again; a chain of reasoning is cut short, by the death of a man of genius—the art of printing preserves it—another man takes it up, lengthens it, and dies—a third adds but a link, and discovers *a truth*, at which he never would have arrived, but for the labours of his predecessors, preserved by the art of printing. To him is attributed the merit of a discovery, which, but for the shortness of human life, might have belonged to another; and but for the duration of the art of printing, might never have been made. When this discovery, under these circumstances, presents itself to the mind, how many blended relations co-exist in the thought!

G. Is the sentence *"I observe their position,"* as used just now, a simple sentence?

P. It comes under the grammatical definition of a simple sentence; but it is of a very different character from "art is long." It is well that you made the enquiry, as it will lead to information which I believe you will find in no grammar. In them, simple sentences are sub-divided into three classes—Explicative, Interrogative, and Imperative; the nature of which you may collect from the meanings of the three words, by which the classes are distinguished. From these, the one concerning which you enquired, and all like it, are as different as one from one thousand.

G. It seems to me that sentences of this kind, indicate a kind of simple synthesis of thought, embracing in one complex state of the mind, things and their relations.

P. Very well. You have the idea which I wished to convey. I need therefore, say no more about them.

G. But I will. These sentences shall not like the "Great Unknown"* possessing literary merit of the highest order, be undistinguished for the want of a name. I will call them *simple synthetical* sentences, and when two or more of them are coupled together, *compound synthetical* sentences.

P. Which perhaps, George, will be considered in regard to these appellations, as near relations to disjunctive conjunctions.

G. What are they?

P. A class of words with very odd names. You will soon be introduced to them.

G. Well, I shall have the consolation in my folly, of being in learned company.

P. Let us return to our analysis. Look at the 4th, 5th, and 6th sentences.

G. The 4th and 5th are simple sentences, and the 6th, is a compound of them. The word *because* is the joining link. So then, *and* and *because,* being both connectives, have this trait of resemblance in common. There is therefore, a class of connectives.

P. Yes there is. You have discovered a general truth.

G. It does not seem to me though, that the words *because* and *and,* have the same meaning.

P. Recollect that they may be of the same class, if alike in *one respect,* however different in all other respects.

* A designation applied to the author of the Waverley Novels, who has lost nothing in the estimation of the public, by being known. Famous as are the letters of Junius, it has been remarked, that he would have been forgotten long ago, had the world known *whom to forget!* But it is the proud boast of this master hand, that he could stamp "Exegi monumentum" upon the untitled work of his genius, and that when his name is added, the inscription shall be unfading.

G. True, and all words which have this one trait of resemblance,—the power given to them by custom, to connect simple sentences, must belong to the class of connectives.

P. Examine then, the remaining sentences, and point out the connectives.

G. In the 9th, the word *for* is the connective, in the 12th *if*, and in the 15th, *neither* and *nor*, are the connectives.

P. From this class of words, by means of which simple sentences are compounded, there have been framed *two divisions.* The words which we have been considering, belonging to one of these divisions, are called by grammarians, Conjunctions.

G. I suppose that these conjunctions are also divided into classes.

P. Yes, divided and sub-divided according to the views of different grammarians, and the various traits of resemblance discoverable in them. They are however generally divided into two classes to which names rather odd have been given, Copulative Conjunctions and Disjunctive Conjunctions, that is to say, *connectives that connect*, and *connectives that disconnect.* How do you like the relations of your *simple* and *compound synthetical* godsons?

G. Not very well. Yet I suspect that there is *some difference* indicated by these epithets, *conjunctive* and *disjunctive*, and I care little about names, if I can ascertain the things of which they are the *signs.*

P. You will easily discover the difference. Their resemblance, we have ascertained to consist in the connexion of simple sentences. Their difference will be obvious from the examination of these sentences.

John *and* William will go.

John *or* William will go.

G. I see it at once. *And* is copulative, and *or* is disjunctive. In the first sentence, *and* includes John and William in one sentence, and joins them in the same action. In the second, *or* includes them in one sentence, but disjoins them in the action.

P. In all the sentences which have been analysed, the difference between those that are simple and those that are compound, you have perceived to consist in the presence of a conjunction, copulative, or disjunctive. The conjunction is not always expressed. It is sometimes implied.

G. Are there any other words which connect simple sentences and form them into compounds, besides conjunctions? If there are, I know they must belong to a class including, not only conjunctions, but all words which have the power of connecting simple sentences.

P. Yes there are, but we will defer the consideration of them till to-morrow.

DIALOGUE THE 9th.

P. In our last conversation, you enquired if there were any words, besides *conjunctions,* which serve to connect simple sentences, and thus to form them into a compound sentence. There is another class of words which have that effect, and if that effect had been regarded as the trait of resemblance in forming classes, they would necessarily have been arranged in the same class with conjunctions.

But, you will discover, that a different arrangement has been made, in consequence of another power of signification possessed by these words, which does not belong to conjunctions.

The following sentences, examined and compared, will afford the results which we now wish to obtain.

Analysis the second.

No. 1. I saw a man yesterday.
2. This is the man.
3. This is the man *whom* I saw yesterday.
4. I gave you a book.
5. This is the book.
6. This is the book *which* I gave you.
7. These are the books *which* I gave you.
8. This is the book, or these are the books, *that* I gave you.
9. This is the man or woman, or these are the men or women, *that* I saw yesterday.
10. I want some thing, (or things.)
11. This is the thing, (or these are the things.)
12. This is, or these are *what* I want.

G. The 1st, 2d, 4th, 5th, 10th and 11th, are simple sentences; all the rest are compound. And I see at once that the words *whom*, *which*, *that* and *what*, are the connectives which produce the difference between the simple and compound sentences.

P. Do they not also answer another purpose?

G. Yes. When I say "this is the man *whom* I saw," the word *whom* also means *the man;* and in the other compound sentences, the connective words all stand for, or are the signs of the names of things, as well as connectives.

P. That is, they have the power of conjunctions and pronouns, united in one word.

G. And may, therefore, be classed either with conjunctions or pronouns, as the trait of resemblance on which their classification is made, may be either their *connective* or *representative* quality.

P. These words, in Mr. Murray's grammar, are called *relative pronouns.*

G. Then, their *representative power* is the trait of resemblance regarded in their classification, and in the general term which is the name of their class; and their connective power is disregarded in both, unless the word *relative* is added to denote it.

P. You may judge of that from Mr. Murray's definition. He says they "relate, in general, to some word or phrase, going before, which is thence called the antecedent."

G. This definition seems only to regard the relation of the pronoun to what it represents; to its antecedent, and not to the effect produced by it in forming a compound sentence.

P. That effect may be *a consequence* of its relation to the antecedent which it represents; and if it is, the classification, perhaps, ought rather to have for its basis the direct power, than the consequential effect of words.

G. I see that these pronouns are *not limited,* in their representative character, *to any gender* or *number,* but are very general terms. For, it seems to be in accordance with reputable custom, from your examples, to say *man who,* or *men who* or *that; thing* or *things which,* or *that,* &c.

P. Of that, hereafter. Our present object is confined to *the difference* between simple and compound sentences; and that difference, we have ascertained to consist in the

introduction or implied use of a conjunction, or a relative pronoun.

G. We have seen, that they do have that power. Can they not be used without producing that effect?

P. If they could, their introduction would not constitute *the difference* between simple and compound sentences.

G. Well, then, if there are no other words, by the use of which this difference is effected, we may proceed to the analysis of simple sentences; for, I can soon become acquainted with all the conjunctions and relative pronouns mentioned in the grammar. And I shall know that every sentence in which there is either a conjunction or relative pronoun, is a compound sentence; and that every sentence in which there is neither, is a simple sentence.

P. Very well. But have you been using conjunctions and relative pronouns, for seven or eight years, without knowing their particular qualities and effects?

G. It seems to me, that I have used language pretty much as most people use a watch or clock, without knowing any thing of the machinery, except those parts, the uses of which are obvious at first sight; such as the hands, the dial plate, and the spring or weights. As for the pins, and screws, and wheels, I know they must perform their parts; but what those parts are, I am as ignorant as if I had never seen a watch or clock in my life.

P. The knowledge of these things, although it may be desirable, is not necessary to *the owner* of a watch. His watch may keep time, without his possessing any knowledge of mechanics. But I think the *watch-maker*, should know all these things; and as we are all *sentence-makers*, I think we should become acquainted with the materials and machinery of sentences.

G. I think so too, and will attempt in my sentences to have "proper words in their proper places."

P. And spoken at the proper time, I hope. Now repeat to me *the trait of resemblance, and the difference* in simple and compound sentences, and the means by which the difference is produced.

G. A simple sentence is a connexion of words, expressing thought or feeling. A compound sentence is a connexion of simple sentences expressing thoughts or feelings. The resemblance consists in the expression of thought or feeling. The difference consists in the connexion of sentences by the means of conjunctions, or relative pronouns.

DIALOGUE THE 10th.

P. In our last conversation, we ascertained that simple and compound sentences *agree* in the expression of thought or feeling, and *differ* in this, that the compound sentences are connexions, *not* of *words only*, to express thought or feeling, but of *connexions* of *words* or *sentences*. And we saw that this connexion of sentences is affected by the means of Conjunctions, or of Relative Pronouns.

G. The field of our examination, I perceive, will become continually narrower as we advance. For, if I rightly comprehend the advantages to be derived from classification, and the application of Analysis, *the difference* between classes or individuals being *ascertained* and *abstracted*, there remains nothing but what is common to both; so that the Analysis then becomes confined to the common traits of resemblance. As these belong equally

to all and every one, the Analysis of one answers for that of all. I like this method very much.

P. You are right; and if we pursue the investigation, we must ultimately arrive at the elementary, articulate sounds, out of which simple materials, the immense edifice of language, has been constructed; an edifice, with which you became familiar, before you were capable of accurately examining either its strong basis, or its lofty and splendid superstructure "crowned with the wreath of every muse, deck'd with the spoils of every art." Presented to your infant eyes, you became accustomed to view it without emotion, and it ceased to excite curiosity, before that curiosity could be gratified. Permit me still to hope, that you will not now pass by it, like the peasant who in reply to the enquiry, "what is that tremendous roaring which I hear?" answered, "*nothing but Niagara.*"

G. O No! My curiosity is awakened and I feel so much interested, that I will attempt to examine it

"From turret to foundation stone."

P. You will be amply remunerated for *the labour* it will cost. *Labour it will cost*, like every thing else worth obtaining. We voluntarily endure fatigue, and encounter difficulties and even dangers, to gratify our taste for what is beautiful or sublime in the works of nature—to follow with soothing sensations, the gentle windings of a placid streamlet—to look with amazement mingled with delight, on the broad expanse and majestic course of the Potomac—to trace his waters to the mountains, and to hang with awe, astonishment and terror over the edge of the precipice, torn down to its lowest foundation by the angry torrent rolling below. Such is the scene we *laboured* to behold at Harper's Ferry. Not less interesting, not less wonderful, is language; whether we consider it in its present state as the greatest of all artificial curiosities, or in its primitive simplicity as the gift of our Creator, or as the pro-

duction of those powers with which he has endowed us. Its foundation is a few simple sounds; its superstructure has a more than magic power to awaken all the tender sensibilities, or to arouse all the sublime and terrible emotions of the soul. All this and more, it can accomplish in its oral form. In its more durable but less affecting character of conventional signs, it can express, not indeed with the energy of speech, but with more lasting power, all that speech can utter. It can preserve and convey from age to age, the thoughts and the actions of the whole human race. Of this edifice, the simple sentence is no inconsiderable part. It bears the same relation in language to the compound sentence, that the Corinthian column in architecture does to one of the composite order. It therefore deserves particular examination.

G. I should suppose, as a simple sentence makes complete sense, we might by a succession of them, without any other form of speech, express all our thoughts.

P. That may be, but men never have been satisfied with *necessaries only*, and we must expect to find in speech the effects of the desire of luxury which pervades all the labours of man. It is also much affected by the love of convenience, novelty, ease and ornament. That we may ascertain what is *essential* to the formation of simple sentences, we must abstract from them all that is not indispensable to the expression of complete sense, because this is their effect. If you wished to examine any complicated machine, with a view to ascertain what was *essential* in it to produce its proper effect, how would you proceed?

G. I would take away, or abstract part after part, until I found that the abstraction of any one piece more would stop the machine, and destroy the effect intended to be produced. So long as the machine did its work *without* the parts taken away, I should deem *them* not necessary to the production of the effect.

P. Very well. Let us apply this principle of analysis to simple sentences, and we shall discover what is necessary to produce their effect—*complete sense.* What is the smallest number of words with which you can express complete sense?

G. So little has my attention been turned to the analytical examination of language, that I have never made the experiment, in order to discover that truth. But I know from ordinary experience, that very few words will make complete sense. Two, it seems to me, are enough for that purpose, as—*John plays; Jane runs, They go, He stays, Birds fly, Dogs bark—*

P. Enough. You need not "air your whole vocabulary." Would not one word make sense, as when I say to you, *run,* or *go?*

G. Not complete sense I think, for in these cases the *person addressed* is implied. If you were speaking to me, it seems that my name is understood to be connected with *run* or *go,* as *run George* or *go George.*

Analysis the third.

P. "Your brother John plays on the carpet merrily with his marbles." Can you take away any of the words in this sentence and leave complete sense?

G. Yes; if all the words be taken away except these two, *John plays,* they will make sense, although all the words in the sentence are necessary to convey all the ideas intended to be expressed.

P. If you take away either your *brother John* or *plays,* will the other words make sense?

G. I think not.

P. Then all the other words must relate to these necessary words, and convey accessory ideas.

G. They are the *principal personages,* on whose account the rest are introduced as *attendants.* It seems to me that I have discovered a general truth in regard to simple sentences.

P. What is it?

G. That the *relation felt in the mind* from the connexion between the two words necessary to the formation of a simple sentence, is *the same* in all simple sentences. For instance, when I say—*John runs, Jane plays, I think, We learn,* the very same kind of relation is felt to exist between *John* and *runs, Jane* and *plays, I* and *think, We* and *learn.*

P. You are right; and this general truth is the basis of all the rules in the grammars which relate to the agreement of a verb, with its nominative case. It is the most important rule of all in regard to the connexion of words, and constitutes the specific difference between simple sentences and what are called *phrases.*

G. All the other words in the sentence relate to one of the principal words, *John* or *plays.* The words *your* and *brother* convey ideas relating to John; the words *on the carpet,* designate the place where he plays; the word *merrily,* indicates the state of mind which is displayed by his manner of playing; and *with his marbles,* relate to both *John* and *plays* for the word *his,* means belonging to *John,* and the word *marbles,* denotes the instruments *used in playing.*

P. You can now understand, in its full extent, the meaning of an observation made to you in a former conversation—"That there is nothing in language but words rightly connected." For no sound or combinations of sounds, unless expressing thought or feeling, can be properly termed *language.*

G. As then, the relation felt to exist between the nominative case and the verb, (for I understand *John* to be what is called a nominative case, and *plays* the verb) produces in the mind a certain state in regard to the things of which the nominative and the verb are the signs, or converts *nonsense* into *sense,* I should conclude, that all other rela-

tions of words to each other, are inferior to this grand invisible, but powerful *sentence-maker.*

P. Your conclusion is correct, and the term which you have invented to distinguish that relation, which *when felt to exist*, gives to words the power of expressing all that we think or feel, seems to me very appropriate. Other relations modify sentences, and connect accessory ideas, but this is indeed the sentence-maker. It is the tie between the soul and the body of speech; between the parts of the physical organization, and the principle of vitality. All the bodily organs may retain *their* relative connexions, and still the beautiful and complicated fabric is a *lifeless form*, an inanimate body. Thus inspired—the lifeless form, the inanimate body starts up into life and animation, into thought and feeling. At once, the cold and breathless lineaments are inspired with "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn."

G. It really seems wonderful that this feeling of the mind, arising from the use of words having no vocal or visible connexion, should never have been an object of thought with me. I had no idea that the connexion was mental.

P. Our language, from its figurative character, often deceives us, or conceals the plain truth. We speak of the treasures of learning and knowledge contained in a good library, without being conscious that, without the operation of mind, books contain nothing but valueless unmeaning scrawls. The connexion between language and things, is intellectual. The mind is the interpreter as well as the inventor of signs. The ignorant man in society, and the savage in the forest, to whom the ideas, of which books contain the signs, do not belong, would possess no treasure in all the books that have been ever written.

G. The advantages of the analytical method, are now manifest to me. If I had been considering the words in their separate state, with a view to their combination, in-

stead of considering the compound with a view to ascertain its component parts, *the connexion* of the words, and its nature would not have been discovered. For, I remember that I could only correct the errors involving a wrong connexion of words, which you gave me to rectify, by a recurrence in my mind, to sentences which I had been accustomed to hear.

P. When we reflect on the circumstance which led Sir Isaac Newton to the discovery of that general truth in Physics, called the *law of gravitation*, we conclude that it was not the fall of the apple, *separately* considered, nor the earth, a larger body, to which it fell. These were presented to his mind in a certain *state of relation.* The attempt to consider them separately, to analyse the compound phenomenon, developed the connexion of the parts. The smaller body *fell to the larger.* He knew this to be true of other smaller bodies. He had never seen a larger body than the earth, fall to it. Here, then, were two classes of bodies, larger and smaller. *He suspects* that this relation of motion, from the smaller to the larger, may be one of the common traits of resemblance belonging *to all the class* containing the smaller bodies. If this should be true, the relative magnitudes, motions and distances, of bodies in the heavens, would confirm the *suspicion*—a stupendous problem, involving in its solution, the knowledge of the relative motion of atoms, of the earth, of the planets, and of all the bodies in the Universe. He continued to observe, to compare, to examine, and he solved it. This method of examination and reasoning, is called the *inductive method*, and when applied to science generally, in contradistinction to other modes of investigation, it is called the Inductive Philosophy.*

G. You are of opinion, that this method led to a discovery of the general truths which relate to language.

P. The rules of Syntax certainly were discovered from

* See note H, at the end of the book.

the examination and comparison of *sentences.* They never could have been even *suspected* to exist, from the consideration of separate words; nor can the grammarian exemplify or illustrate them, but by sentences. They are not the properties of words, but of the mind, producing expressions of thought by their intellectual connexion. It is true, that in our language, and perhaps in all others, many words have been invented for the express purpose of embodying several ideas, corresponding to complex states of the mind; and because the mental connexion is made between the parts of the complex word in the same manner as between separate words, it has been thought that such words were not only signs of things, but that *they* also actually *expressed relations,* whereas such words are nothing more than the blended and abbreviated *signs* of *things* or *thoughts,* and their connexion by which related thoughts or sense, as it is called, arises in the mind, is purely intellectual, and is not embodied in any sound or written sign. When we say *horse* or *man, the connexion* between the sound horse or man, which you know is merely a sign, and the animal which is the thing, is not expressed. We know the fact, that the mind does connect the sign with the thing signified, *without any connexion of our own invention.* The means of this intellectual operation, and the manner in which it is effected, are like all ultimate truths, beyond the limits of our comprehension, and are known only to the all-wise Creator. In our next conversation we will resume the consideration of these useful compound words, which owe their origin to the same principle in our nature that has produced all other labour-saving machines, and brief and easy methods for the accomplishment of our purposes. It is a subject not fully explained in the grammatical history of language, and perhaps less understood than it ought to be, if we consider what facilities an intimate acquaintance with it, affords to us in the acquisition of our own and other tongues.

DIALOGUE THE 11th.

P. In speaking of those general truths, called the rules of Syntax, I said in our last conversation, that they are not the properties of words, but of the mind, producing expressions of thought by the intellectual connexion of words; and I mentioned the refined invention of complex words, and the error in regard to them, of supposing that *they* actually express *relations*. After saying something more of these complex words, which I promised, we will return to sentences. You know that the word *John's*, is called by the grammarians, the possessive case of John; and the possessive case is said to express "the relation of property, or possession." But it seems to me that no relation is expressed, and that the relation arises in the mind between the two signs blended in the word *John's;* one of these signs representing the person called John, and the other, by a word now contracted into *'s*, representing, not the relation of property or possession, but property or possession itself. I find no difference in the elements of thought, in these two expressions,—John lent me John's book—John lent me his book.

G. I think I have the idea which you wish to convey. The word John's contains the signs of two things, and the *mind connects* these two things, in the same manner that it connects them when signified by separate words.

P. Yes; the power of the mind is not limited to the interpretation of simple signs; the word ice-house, or glow-worm, contains the signs of two things; and the relation between them arises in the mind, as readily as the relation

between the simple sign ice, and the thing which these three letters *i-c-e* represent. We use many contractions, in which no grammarian has said that *any relation is expressed;* yet they are perfectly intelligible: such as *can't* for *cannot; I'll,* for *I will,* &c.* We will now return to the two classes of relations found in sentences. The one which you called the *sentence-maker,* is by grammarians termed the *agreement of the Verb with its nominative case;* or is rather the foundation of that rule, applied to *the expression* of thought. The other, I denominated the class of *modifying relations;* because they never make sentences, but frequently modify them. Do you remember, George, what is said of a definition, in "Evening's at Home," in the conversation on the art of *distinguishing?*

G. I remember the meaning; but I cannot explain it, in the style of simple and easy elegance, with which it is there expressed.

P. Will you then, read the paragraph?

G. It always gives me pleasure to open that book. Here it is: "It is the business of a definition to distinguish precisely, the thing defined, from every other thing; and to do it in as few terms as possible. Its object is to separate the subject of definition, first from those with which it has only a general resemblance, then from those which agree with it in a greater variety of particulars, and so on; till by constantly throwing out all which have not the qualities we have taken notice of, we come at length to the individual, or the species, we wish to ascertain." Why, sir, this is only another name for analysis; and it seems to me, that we have been following this "*chase*" as it is called, ever since we began to analyse compound sentences.

* "*Use* renders them intelligible."—*Campbell.* See note I, at the end of the book.

P. A definition is one of the results of analysis, though far from comprehending all the game caught in that chase. If you understand what has been said of analysis, you must know that it not only enables us to catch the definition ultimately, but to observe during our progress, the resemblances and differences of objects, and to feel their various relations: it leads us therefore, *to suspect*, and finally to *discover* those general truths, called the Laws of Nature; or Rules, according to the classes of objects to which they relate. How then, shall we define that feeling, or state of the mind, which is produced by a nominative and the verb?

G. I feel that it creates sense, but I cannot define it.

P. I know that it is difficult to define relations of this kind. This feeling is produced generally by a noun and a verb, or by a pronoun and a verb; but frequently, many words connected by the inferior modifying relations, and even sentences, paragraphs, and whole books, may be taken in connexion with a verb as a nominative; and yet this feeling is generally considered as the property of a noun, or pronoun. As we shall have to speak of this feeling frequently, we will give it a name, whether that name shall be considered as a definition or not. That feeling which you had, when you called this relation the *sentence-maker*, is *the thing*. To express that feeling, or state of the mind, so as to enable you, when I speak of it, to recognise as the thing of which I speak, *the same feeling*, which has been a state of your own mind, will be sufficient for our purpose.* This feeling of the mind seems to be produced, or suggested, by that related or complex consideration of things, which is called *sense*, or a *sentence*, when expressed by words. We may there-

* See Destutt Tracy's supplement to the Elements of Ideology, aphorism 10th, and the observation on it.

fore, term it the *Sentific Suggestion.** It arises in the mind, from the perception of objects in any state of relation to each other; and in the same manner, from the use of words, the signs of objects. That it can arise in the mind from the use of two words, the nominative, and a verb, we have already ascertained. Whatever word or words are necessary to be taken into consideration with a verb, in order to produce the sentific suggestion, must be termed the nominative to the verb; and all other words or phrases modify the sense, or sentence, by their relation to the nominative, or to the verb.

G. Give me an illustration if you please.

P. Here is one:

Analysis the fourth.

"On Friday last, the Steam-boat, with fifty passengers on board, returned from Washington, to Maryland Point, in eight hours."

G. I see at once, that the sentific suggestion is produced by the word *Steam-boat*, mentally connected with the verb *returned.* For, if I say "*on Friday last,*" &c. leaving out the word Steam-boat, the remainder will not produce the sentific suggestion; although there are many other names of things, connected by the inferior modifying relations. And if I leave out the verb *returned*, there is the same result.

P. Yet all the other words, connected with these two principal words, are necessary to express what is intended. Again—"*Living with vicious persons, renders children immoral.*"

* To those who have read the modern writers on the Philosophy of the Mind, it is needless to say, that this expression is intended to denote a state of the mind belonging to the class of "*Relative suggestions;*" and that the term *Sentific* is added, to mark its individual character as the sentence-making suggestion, when applied to verbal expressions of thought.

G. Living and *renders* are the nominative, and the verb.

P. Think again. I am not sure that the mere act of living, renders children immoral.

G. It does not. It takes all the four words, "*living, with, vicious, persons,*" to produce the idea intended to be expressed by the nominative. Therefore, those four words are *the nominative* to the verb *renders.*

P. Very well. You see then, that the nominative case is not the property of any class of words; but that whatever, being connected with a verb, produces the sentific suggestion, be it a word, or words, is the nominative case.

G. Yes I do; and it is evident to me, that without the production of the sentific suggestion, by a nominative, and a verb, there is no sentence.

P. Reflect on the subject of this conversation, and tomorrow I will give you some examples of compound sentences; after which, we will proceed to the consideration of the modifying relations so often found in sentences, both simple, and compound.

DIALOGUE THE 12th.

P. In our last conversation, I promised to give you some examples of compound sentences, before we descended to the consideration of the inferior relations of words, constituting what are called *phrases.* Here is a compound sentence in its simplest form:

Analysis the fifth.

"John and Jane play." Can you express the same otherwise?

G. Yes; thus,—John plays and Jane plays. But I am forced to add an *s,* to the end of the verb, play, in order to comply with custom.

P. The reason is, that the word, plays, according to reputable use, when taken as a verb, is always associated with a nominative *conveying the idea of a single thing spoken of.* But John, and Jane, with the word *and* between them, which word conveys the idea of addition, present to the mind, more objects than one. For you know that in speaking of John, and Jane, we mean both of them, and not one, considered separately.

G. I know we do; for we would, in speaking of them, say *they,* if we did not repeat their names. I observe that this contrivance prevents repetition, and makes the sentence shorter.

P. In order to render language more precise, and as free as possible from ambiguity, a method has been adopted, when the sentific suggestion arises from the use of a

nominative, and verb, of adding something to the verb, in many instances, to indicate whether the nominative conveys the idea of a single object or more than one; and also, whether it conveys the idea of a person speaking, of a person or thing spoken of, or of a person or thing spoken to. And from the use of this contrivance, a general rule has been formed. It is thus expressed by Mr. Murray: "A verb must agree with its nominative case, in number and person."

G. The meaning of this rule then, is this; that when the nominative, be it a word, or a phrase, conveys the idea of *one object*, the verb with which it is associated to produce the sentific suggestion, must also be a word, conveying a similar idea: so that the word *plays* not only conveys the idea of play performed, but also that it is performed by a *single person, spoken of.*

P. You understand then, that such words as "*plays,*" are signs of several things?

G. Yes; complex signs.

P. You will have very little difficulty in understanding this agreement of the nominative, and the verb, after reading over the conjugation of a few verbs. You already know, that *I* and *we*, are general terms, never used but by a *person*, or *persons, speaking. Thou*, and *you* or *ye*, are used, instead of the names of a person or persons, or a thing or things, *to whom* we speak; *he, she* and *it*, are used for a person or thing, and *they*, for persons or things, *of or concerning which*, we speak. Now, *I* and *we*, are grammatically denominated *the first person, singular*, and *plural; thou*, and *ye* or *you*, the *second person, singular*, and *plural;* and *he, she, it*, and *they*, are the *third person, singular*, and *plural:* and all other words, the signs of persons or things, *of which any thing is said*, are of *the third person;* and *singular* or *plural*, according to the number of objects which they designate.

G. In a grammatical point of view, animals and inanimate things, then, are considered as persons.

P. Yes. If you *speak to* a dog, thus—*Come here, Castano*—the word *Castano*, the dog's name, is said to be *in the second person;* but, if you speak *of him*, thus—*Castano hunts well*—his name, *Castano*, is *in the third person.* When, from use, certain words became the signs of individual or singular things, and others, of more than one, or plural, and of persons speaking, spoken to, and spoken of, from some idea of fitness, the words connected with these nominatives to produce the sentific suggestion, were said to be of the same number and person with them. Hence, the verb *must agree with* the nominative; must conform to it; and not the nominative to the verb. Because of the continual association of nominatives and verbs, the properties of number, and person, are attributed to the latter. The idea of *plurality* could never have been attached to a word considered as conveying the idea of *one action*, as in the expression *boys play*, (playing, whether done by one or more, being but one thing,) but for its connexion with a nominative, (boys,) to which the idea of plurality attaches inseparably, as a property; that nominative being the *sign of things* in nature. If *the number* of verbs had been derived from the consideration of the verbs themselves, and not communicated by the nominative, it would have been more logical to consider two or more verbs connected together, although the nominative should be singular, as constituting a plural; as in this expression: *John sings and plays.* Because, here are two actions.

G. Notwithstanding this, I suppose that whenever the nominative is plural, I must consider the verb, though expressing but one action, as a plural word, and agreeing with its nominative.

P. Yes; and singular, when the nominative is singular, although there may be many verbs connected with the same nominative. Here are a few more examples for you.

Analysis the sixth.

No. 1. John, and Jane, and George, play.

2. John, Jane, William, Henry, and Charles, play.

3. John sings, and plays, and dances.

4. John sings, plays, and dances.

5. John or Jane plays.

6. John plays, more than Jane.

7. John plays, as much as Jane.

G. In the two first sentences the verb is plural, because the action is referred to more persons than one. In all the other sentences, the verb is singular, because the action or actions are referred to one; or where there are more than one, to the individuals separately considered. They do not perform the action jointly, as in the two first examples. I might as well say, John plays and Jane plays; John plays more than Jane plays; John plays as much as Jane plays. The repetition of the word *plays* is avoided I see, and the same meaning is conveyed.

P. Very well. What will you do with these two sentences? The nominative is the same word in both; and yet in one, the verb according to reputable custom is singular, and in the other, plural?

The multitude is great.

The multitude are divided.

G. There is no difficulty in their analysis. Singular, means one individual, or one collection of individuals, considered collectively, as one. But *the parts* of any collection may be the subject of thought, as well as the whole; and the same word or sign may represent either the whole as one, or the parts as more than one. The same word, therefore, may be I suppose, grammatically considered, either as singular or plural. I may then say, *the multitude is, or are,* according to my mental reference of the sign multitude to *one whole,* or to *the parts* composing it.

P. We will now consider the influence of the *person* of the nominative on the verb, having seen the effect produced by the *number* of the nominative in the preceding illustrations.

Analysis the seventh.

No. 1. I play, or we play.
2. Thou playest, or ye or you play.
3. The boy plays, or the girl plays, or he, she, or it plays.
4. The boys play, or the girls play, or they play.

In these, the verb is not only said to be singular or plural according to *the number* of its nominative, but of *the first, second, or third person,* according to its agreement in producing the sentific suggestion, with a nominative of the first, second, or third person.

G. I see it plainly. In *I* play and *we* play, the verb is said to be of the *first person;* In *thou* playest and *ye* or *you* play, of the *second person,* and in all the rest, of the *third person;* and I also learn, in consequence of these ideas of number and person being so closely attached to the verb, (although only belonging to the nominative) by the sentific suggestion arising from them, that the verb has received an addition in some instances, forming a *complex word* containing the signs of these ideas, as well as of the action denoted by the verb.

P. You are right; for the word *plays* is the sign not only of the action, but of the *singular number,* and *third person;* and the word *playest* of the same action, and of the *second person,* and the *singular number.* These words can therefore never be associated with nominatives in the plural number, or of other persons than the third, and second. You may observe too, that very slight additions answer the purpose: the single letter *s,* in the one

case, and the syllable *est* in the other. In some complex words, it would seem that some ideas comprehended in them, were considered as *principal;* and the others as *accessory* only. In the word *cousin* for instance, there are the ideas of relationship by blood, and of a person thus related. All persons are of the masculine, or feminine gender, yet this word does not express either: we are therefore led to conclude, that the relationship is the principal idea, and that of person accessory or accidental only; but in the word *widower*, the idea of person seems to be the principal, as it expresses gender and the circumstance of his deprived condition, the accessory idea. The single letter *I*, the sign of a simple articulate sound, is perhaps one of the most comprehensive in the whole system of language; excluding the idea of gender, which is a natural property of every one whom this sign can represent, because the inclusion of that idea would render it less general, and would limit its use to males or famales, and render two such words necessary, one for males and one for females. It is the sign of a being endowed with speech,—in the act of speaking—in the act of speaking of himself, as an individual,—always a nominative, and of the first person.

G. It is wonderful that so many ideas can be expressed by one little mark of a pen or pencil, or by one single aspiration of the voice. Such words seem to be a synthesis of ideas, or rather significant of a very complex state of the mind.

P. We shall say more of them, when we descend to the consideration of individual words. The few observations which I have made on the subject, were intended to illustrate *the effect* of the idea of fitness between the nominative and the verb, in having produced additions to the verb, incorporating with it the ideas of number and person.

DIALOGUE THE 13th.

P. In our last conversation, I explained to you *an effect* produced by the invariable connection of a nominative and a verb, in the creation of the sentific suggestion. That number and person should be attributed to verbs, is that effect; the verb being always considered to conform to the number and person of its nominative, as if number and person were inherent parts of the verb itself, and were inseparable from it. We know that *number* is the sign of an idea arising from things in nature, and that *person*, in its grammatical meaning, may vary continually in regard to the same individual, according to the relation which he occupies, of *speaker*, the person *spoken to*, or the person *spoken of*. Most of the rules of Syntax relate to this agreement between the verb and its nominative, in number and person. I will now give you one example of a nominative containing many words, and yet singular; and of one containing many words, which is plural—That a young man of good family, and of talents improved by judicious cultivation and polished by the habitual intercourse of enlightened society, whose views of men and manners have been extended by travel in his own country and in foreign lands, who might be serviceable to the state in which he lives, and an ornament to the circle in which he moves, should sit down in useless indolence, spending his time in idle amusement or in frivolous pleasures, while all around him are actively engaged in works of improvement and utility, *presents* to us a spectacle lamentable in itself, and more affecting from contrast.

G. I see, plainly, that one compound sentence may be thus extended through volumes. You have only to say what you please before you introduce the verb *presents:* the sentific suggestion arises in the mind from *that* verb, and all that precedes it.

P. Again: To live in the same house with persons of improved minds, well regulated and gentle tempers, and elegant manners, to have such in our neighbourhood whose society we can enjoy without labour and at no expense, and with all these sources of pleasure, to possess a good library, and musical instruments with which the members of your own family can cheer your evening hours, and "cheat the listening ear of time," *are* the circumstances which give to existence its most fascinating charm, and lighten the sorrows of its gloomy scenes.

G. I wish you had not so soon introduced the plural verb *are;* you might first have added fishing, and fowling, and hunting, and riding, and walking, and playing at chess, and—

P. Stop! You have a great propensity to connect many words together.

G. And therefore I should be permitted to do it, that I may learn to perform such feats with *propriety.*

P. You should use words and phrases with *propriety,* but even you, George, cannot connect them with *impropriety.*

G. Why, that is the most extraordinary and pleasing news which I have yet heard! The grammar in my head is more valuable than I even dared to hope.

P. It is only a small abridgment. There are in the history of language many interesting particulars not contained in your grammar, or in any other I believe, yet from any grammar, except your own perhaps, you might have acquired the information necessary to the right use of the word *propriety* when applied to language.

G. Pray inform me what it does mean in its grammatical acceptation.

P. Doctor Campbell, whom I have often quoted, says, "*Pure English* implies three things; accordingly in three different ways it may be injured. First, the words used may not be English. This fault hath received from grammarians, the denomination of *Barbarism*. Secondly, the construction of the sentence may not be in the English idiom. This hath gotten the name of *Solecism*. Thirdly, the words and phrases may not be employed to express the precise meaning, which custom hath affixed to them. This is termed *Impropriety*."*

G. I should have said then, that I ought to be taught to connect words without violating the idiom of the language by *a solecism*. I wish to read the book from which you have extracted these remarks.

P. You will soon have acquired the information necessary to read it with advantage; and with such information, you cannot read any book on language from which you can derive more advantage, or be misled by fewer errors. You must not conclude though, that purity of language, consisting in freedom from barbarism, solecism, and impropriety, is all at which a man should aim in speaking and writing. "He ought to be master of the language which he speaks or writes, and to be capable of adding to grammatic purity, those higher qualities of elocution which will give *grace* and *energy* to his discourse. It will be evident on reflection, that purity is one of those qualities of which, though the want exposes a writer to much censure, the possession hardly entitles him to any praise. The truth is, it is a kind of *negative* quality, as the name im-

* "The observations quoted from the author of the Philosophy of Rhetoric, are, as he remarks, applicable in their spirit to all tongues. The English tongue was chosen to shew their *particular* application." "The art of the logician is universal, the art of the grammarian particular."—*Campbell.*

ports; consisting more in an exemption from certain blemishes than in the acquisition of any excellence: it holds the same place among the virtues of elocution that *justice* holds among the moral virtues. The more necessary each is, and the more blameable the transgression is, the less merit has the observance. Grace and energy on the contrary, are like generosity, and public spirit. To be deficient in these virtues is not treated as criminal, but to be eminent for the practice of them is accounted meritorious." Good style then, requires more than the mere production of the sentific suggestion, by the use of pure English.* My object in these conversations being, as you have been informed, to prepare you for the study of grammar, I now refer you to the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eigteenth, and twentieth rules of syntax, in Murray's grammar; all of which wholly, or partially, treat of the agreement of the verb with its nominative, stating either what is to be considered as the nominative in certain circumstances, and consequently what must be the number and person of the verb connected with it by the sentific suggestion, or stating in what cases the same nominative is connected with two or more verbs. It is thought, and has been stated by writers on grammar, that certain positions or locations of the words, or the punctuation or denotations by points and stops, as they are called, are necessary to the production of the sentific suggestion. These frequently assist, being a kind of local and partitive analysis, in the production of that feeling; but are not absolutely necessary to it. That it can and does frequently arise without their aid, one sentence alone will sufficiently prove. Here is a sentence from Doctor Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric. "The more necessary each is, and the more blameable the transgression is, the less merit has the observance." Although *the place* occupied by the

* See note F, at the end of the book.

nominative "*observance*" is the most usual relative position of a word in a very different case, and although there is no point or stop to help us in the construction, yet the sentific suggestion arises from the nominative "*observance*" and the verb "*has*," from the meaning of the words, and the nature of the mind itself. The conception of the fitness and intended relation of the words to each other to convey the meaning of the writer, is but another name for the sentific suggestion.

G. I suppose, then, that relative position and punctuation perform the office of *Aids to General construction.*

P. They are rather objects in the line of force, assisting in the quick creation of the *coup d'oeil*, or correct view of his formation, if you *will* force your pun upon me.

G. Indeed, sir, I did not try to make a play upon words; it came spontaneously into my mind, how or from what, I cannot conceive.

P. We will try, then, to derive some advantage even from this instance of a common, and amusing, but not very profitable practice. I think I can tell you how, and from what, it came into your mind, and that it produced inattention to the subject of our conversation. Indeed, things of this sort are the most common causes of inattention.

G. I was inattentive for a little time, and my mind wandered from our subject, but how you could find that out, from any thing which I have said, is inconceivable to me.

P. It is both conceivable and capable of easy explanation, if you will attend only to what I say. I had used the word *aid*, which dragged along with it into your mind, what you should at that time have attempted to exclude, as the whole train —— but I shall set you off again.

G. Yes, indeed; for, instead of whatever you intended to say, after "*train*," my mind had already introduced, "of artillery."

P. Drive them off the field, George, and attend to what I am going to explain to you.

G. I will attempt it, if you will first permit me to make one observation.

P. Make it.

G. The field into which we have gotten is so very wide, that in looking across it, you have mistaken the little enclosure of my mind, for the plains of Germany.

P. Well, well—I was only about to tell you, that all this inattention and nonsense arose from the association of ideas, or simple suggestion. The word *aid* you have associated with military operations, the leaders of armies, &c.; and hence when I used it, all these rushed into your mind. But we will now end our conversation for to-day, so you may go—"Horse, foot, and dragoons."

DIALOGUE THE 14th.

P. We have seen that in every sentence, there is a nominative and a verb, producing in the mind the sentific suggestion. We now come to the consideration of *phrases modifying sentences.* There is always some relation existing between words constituting a phrase; and indeed a single word often produces a state of mind, similar to that arising from the use of several words. When one word has this effect, it is not the sign of one thing, but a complex sign embracing more than one; giving rise to rela-

tions among the several ideas signified by it, in the same manner as if these ideas were excited by separate words. Although every word in a language is an individual, that is, it is itself and not another word, yet you have no doubt observed, that many of them differ in some slight respect only.

G. Yes, I have observed it. For instance, *John, John's—write, writings,—lover, lovers.*

P. These will answer for our

Eighth Analysis.

G. Indeed, *John* and *John's* seem to me to be the same word.

P. Then, the letter *s* is a nonentity, and things that differ are yet the same.

G. Not exactly, for there is *a difference.* But they are very much alike.

P. They have so much resemblance, that the grammarians have considered them, and a great number of words having something in common, as one and the same word *in different situations;* and all of these are called *declinable words.*

G. Such as nouns, verbs, and pronouns.

P. Yes; and those that are never allowed the privilege of being any thing but themselves, in all situations, are denominated *indeclinable words.*

G. I suppose, that when any thing is added to a word, or any change made in it, some new idea is to be expressed by it.

P. Yes. If the word be a noun, the changes are made on what is called its *nominative case,* though we have seen how much more comprehensive that word nominative is; if an adjective on the *positive degree,* if a verb on the infinitive mood.

G. The conjugation of a verb seems to me to consist of sentences as *I love, I have loved,* &c.

P. It does, in a great measure. Suppose I say "*John's*" and nothing more; do you think only of John?

G. I think of John, and that something belongs to him.

P. If I say *John's hat?*

G. I think that the hat is the property of John.

P. Then you resolve the phrase into a sentence.

G. Yes, I do; and it now seems to me that whenever two words are put together, or a complex word used, the sentific suggestion arises in my mind; and that phrases and complex words are sentences, *contracted* and thus disguised. If this be true, I shall be able to give them the form of a sentence, by using a nominative and verb to express every thing contained in them.

P. Make the experiment.

G. Well, give me a subject.

P. Take this; "*cool weather.*"

G. The weather is cool.

P. Again; John wants a book.

G. John wants: a book is the thing wanted.

P. Then all the *modifying relations* are nothing but the sentific suggestion produced by various contrivances in language, and connecting things together in thought. Even if this be true, the customary forms of expression must still be observed and used.

G Yes, but it nevertheless throws a new light upon language. It proves that every word has *a meaning of its own;* and when that meaning is known, we may venture to vary the form of our expressions with more freedom and confidence. But why should men ever have invented and used phrases and complex words, when they might have expressed all their thoughts by sentences, containing each a distinct proposition?

P. I think that, although you can now do this in some cases, you will not confine yourself exclusively to the use of the nominative and the verb.

G. No; it is too circuitous for me.

P. And why not, then, for the rest of mankind. Do you not suppose that they would prefer brief methods of speech, as well as yourself?

G. Yes; the love of ease would affect them in the same manner that it does me, I suppose.

P. It has produced many very complex words in our language. I will mention to you one or two *latin* words which comprehend many ideas. The word *amavissem*, means *I might have loved; venturus*, means *about to come;* and also contains the ideas of gender, for it is masculine; of number, for it is singular; and of the nominative case. You have already been referred to those rules of Syntax, which are to be observed as general truths in regard to a nominative and the verb. We will now introduce phrases, illustrating the rules which relate to other connexions of words. You will soon understand them, I hope.

G. All the rules are called rules of agreement, or of government, I believe.

P. Yes, they are; and I will first introduce phrases in which the words are said to *agree.*

Analysis the ninth.

No. 1. An apple.

2. A peach.

How do these words agree? What is the meaning of them, taken together?

G. If I know the meaning of *an*, or *a*, I would say *apple* is *an*, and peach is *a;* but I have never thought of

these words by themselves, or tried to separate them in order to ascertain their individual import. Let me try a little—apple—an apple—man—a man. I think that *a* and *an* have the same meaning; and that they mean *any one*, or *one*, for an apple means any one apple. Then, I can say the apple is one—the peach is one.

P. Indeed you may; for *an*, or *a*, which is nothing but a contraction of it for the sake of sound, means nothing but *one*. It is, therefore, no wonder, that the grammarians have discovered, that "the article *a*, or *an*, agrees with nouns in the *singular number only*." To those who are acquainted with the meaning of *an*, or *a*, the rule is as unnecessary, as it would be to inform them that *one is not more than one*. If, therefore, *a* or *an* were connected with a plural noun by the sentific suggestion, we should have this extraordinary state of mind, that one is more than one.

G. Yet we say *a number*, and *a few*.

P. We do: but I think that these phrases convey the idea of unity; for *a number* means one number, and *a few* means a few collectively considered. You will have no doubt as to the meaning of *a* or *an*, when you become acquainted with the Latin, Spanish, and French languages, in which the words *unus*, *una*, *un*, *une*, (*one* in English,) are used as we use *a*, or *an*. In English, *a* or *an* is indeclinable, although its synonime *one*, you know, has a plural sometimes, as *little ones*, *great ones*, and is declinable; for we add an *s* to it, to include the idea of property or possession, as when we say *one's head* or *one's property*.

G. I understand that when *one* becomes more than *one* by the addition of *s*, if I may be allowed to use such an expression, the plural retains something of the character of the original word; for it is a general term denoting persons or things *indefinitely* considered. I think however,

hat as *a* or *an* is indeclinable, we are plainly led to this conclusion—that the person, or thing to which we apply t, is *one* or *one collection*.

P. Very well. What do these mean, George?

The apple.

The apples.

G. Apple is *the*, apples are *the*. It is evident that the word *the* is not confined to the singular or plural.

P. So the grammarians inform us. "The definite article *the* may agree with nouns in the singular and plural number." But this does not tell us what it means; and I suspect, that when this is known, the reason of the rule will be evident.

G. I think it means *same;* for when I say "*the man whom I saw yesterday*," it means the same man.

P. You have approximated very near to the truth. The word *the* means *assumed, seen, spoken of.**

G. The rule then, contains nothing new to those who know the meaning of the word. For every body knows that we can *assume, see,* or *speak* of things singular and plural. The rules only seem to supply the place of better information, that is, the knowledge of the real import of words.

P. And therefore, they are useful to those who have no access to that better information. It is more satisfactory however, to possess the knowledge which has given rise to the rules, or rather, which renders these rules unnecessary; as they certainly are, to those who know the meaning of the articles *a, an,* and *the.* When the import of these words is ascertained, there can be no difficulty in the phrases in which they occur. It is then evident, that they limit the general terms with which the mind connects them;

* It is the Anglo-Saxon ðe, the perfect participle of ðean to *see, take,* or *assume.* By some Etymologists it is thought to be the imperative mood of the verb.

and that the nature and extent of the limitation depend on the meaning of the words.

G. *A* or *an* limits the phrase to *one; the* to what has been *spoken of, assumed,* or *seen,* without regard to number.

P. "Adjective pronouns must agree in number with their substantives;" as will be seen in our

Tenth Analysis.

No. 1. This apple.
2. These apples.

G. These phrases present no difficulty, as every body knows who can read. I believe that *this* is singular, and *these* plural. Apple is *this,* or *the thing near at hand,* or *last mentioned.* Apples are *these, the things near at hand,* or *last mentioned.*

P. What say you to these phrases?

The fruit an apple.
Peter the man.

G. They seem to be nothing more than repetition, to express a class and something contained in it, or something with a reference of it to its class.

P. Yes; whenever this kind of repetition is made, it is done either to extend the meaning of the phrase from a lower class, or an individual, to a higher class, or to reduce it from a higher to a lower class. When I say "the fruit is an apple," the general term fruit is limited by the word apple; when I say "Peter is the man," the proper name Peter becomes extended, to inform us to what class he belongs. In all cases of this kind, the words referring to each other, are said to be in *Apposition;* that is, similarly situated, or in the same case.

P. Again—

Sweet apples.
Sweeter apples.
Sweetest apples.

G. Sweet is a declinable word; a Proteus in language which can assume many forms, and be yet the same.

P. I have already informed you, that when a word is declined, an additional idea is expressed by every change. These changes are not simple, but complex terms.

G. Then *er* means more, and *est* most; for if I say apples are sweeter, it means more sweet than something else, and sweetest means most sweet.

P. Yes; the *r* or *er* added to adjectives to form the comparative degree, is nothing more than the *end* of the word more, (formerly spelled *moer*) added to the adjectives, to incorporate with them the idea expressed by the word more; and the *st* or *est* forming the superlative degree, is the end of the word most, formerly spelled *moest*.

G. These operations I suppose, have been performed for the sake of brevity of expression.

P. No doubt they have. Where these additions to the end of the adjectives would sound disagreeably, we prefix to them *more* and *most*, to express the same ideas which are incorporated with the adjective, by the terminations *r* or *er*, and *st* or *est;* as *more* agreeable, *most* agreeable. To all the cases of our 9th and 10th Analysis, you will find that the 8th and 9th rules of Syntax in Murray's Grammar apply; and indeed to all cases, where a name or class to which it belongs is expressed, and something is said to agree with it. You will find by experiment, that in all cases of agreement, the sentific suggestion arises between the agreeing words.

DIALOGUE THE 15th.

P. We have now to consider the phrases which come under the rules of government as they are called.

Analysis the eleventh.

No. 1. John's horse.

G. I know that this phrase means, *the horse belongs to John*, yet I cannot resolve it into simple sentences.

P. We will add to it, and perhaps the decomposition will be more easily effected.

No. 2. John's horse runs.

G. The horse runs—The horse is property—John owns the property. From what you said in the beginning of our last conversation, I know that *John's* is a complex sign, containing the idea of property as well as of the person called John.

P. The *s* added to John, is nothing but a contraction of the word *his*. It was formerly used without contraction, and separately, thus—*John his horse.*

G. But *his* seems to be masculine; whereas the *s* is added to females, and to neuters, to incorporate with them the idea of property.

P. Very true; the idea of gender seems to have been dropped in the contraction, that the contraction might be more general and capable of application to all the genders. We say,

No. 3. Mary's bonnet.

4. The prospect's beauty.

And although the idea of gender, as well as of property seems now to be conveyed by the word *his*, we find it not very long ago applied to words certainly neuter in our language. This expression occurs in a translation of the Bible, made with great care by persons well acquainted with our language, in its peculiar idioms. "The *table* and all *his* vessels, and the *candlestick* and all *his* vessels."* Whenever *s* with an apostrophe, is incorporated with a word to add the idea of property or possession, the complex word thus formed, is said to be in the possessive case, and *governed* by the word with which the two ideas in the complex word are connected by the sentific suggestion. Thus in the phrase *John's horse*, and in all similar phrases, the word *horse* is said to govern *John's*. The rule is, "one substantive governs another, signifying a different thing in the possessive or genitive case."

Analysis the twelfth.

No. 1. I hurt him.
2. I hurt John.
3. I hurt her, or it, or them.

G. I hurt—he is the person hurt—and in the same manner, I can dispose of the other examples.

P. You discover then, that the word him, is a complex sign, including two ideas; the one of a person or male thing, the other derived from the word with which it is connected by the sentific suggestion.

G. Yes; *I* and *hurt*, are connected by the sentific suggestion, and *hurt* and *him*, are also connected by it; and the connexion in the latter case is denoted by the change of *he* into *him*. In the second example, although there is no change made upon the word John, the same connexion

* Exodus, chap. 30th, v. 27th.

exists; or rather, the state of mind produced, is the same in regard to him, and John.

P. It is because the same state of mind is produced in both instances, that the words *him* and *John*, are said to be in the *same case:* so in—I love him—I love John.

G. He is the loved object, *John* is the loved object, and the word *I* denotes the loving person in both cases.

P. When that feeling arises in your mind with regard to objects, which you now have in relation to *him*, and *John*, if the objects are connected in your mind with *active verbs transetive*, (that is, verbs which denote action, passing from the agent to some object,) such objects are said to be in the objective case. The rule is, "active verbs govern the objective case." But, when the same feeling arises, and the object is connected by the sentific suggestion with a *passive* verb, as in—He is loved—he is hurt—John is loved—John is hurt—the object is said to be in the nominative case.

G. As there is no change made in the word John, nor I believe in any noun, to distinguish the nominative from the objective case, how am I to ascertain in which of these cases a noun is?—for it seems to me, that the same feeling is produced by these two expressions—*I love John*, and *John is loved by me.*

P. Although there may be the same elements of thought, the verbal expression of them is not the same. And the *grammatical Analysis* of language regards not only the state of mind produced, but the form of expression by which it is produced. Equivalence in meaning does not imply the same words, much less the same construction of them.

Analysis the thirteenth.

No. 1. I write *for you.*

2. He went *for money.*

3. She writes *with a pen.*

4. I walked *with* him.

The words *for* and *with* are called prepositions, as well as many others, and are said to govern the words that follow them in these examples. The rule is "prepositions govern the objective case"—and prepositions are defined to be words that "serve to connect words with one another, and to show the relation between them."

G. But this only informs me what is common to a class of words, and there are so many relations, that unless I can ascertain what relation, or state of mind, or thing, a word is the sign of, I cannot mentally connect it with any thing else.

P. The meaning of the word then, is what you would have?

G. Yes, indeed; or I cannot understand the phrase in which it occurs, nor give a satisfactory solution of it.

P. Try to find the meaning by our usual method.

G. I write. You are the *for.*

He went. Money was the *for.*

It must mean the *cause* I think.

P. You think rightly;* that is the meaning of the word. It is the last change, made for the sake of brevity, on the Gothic word *faikina*, a cause.

G. I wish we had teachers of the Gothic and Anglo-saxon languages.

P. If we had, our language would be better understood; and many modern critics would be deprived of materials on which they exercise much ingenuity and talent to little purpose. Try the next. She writes *with a pen.*

G. Does *with* mean an instrument?

P. I think not. For in the next example *I walked with him*—the word *him* is not the sign of a walking cane.

* "This knight hath leaver *for* to die,
Than breke his trouth and *for* to lie."—*Gower.*

G. O no! It means the person in company with whom I walked.

P. I have not given you examples enough to compare. How would you proceed, if I were to present to you all the phrases in the language in which the same word occurs?

G. I would consider each phrase as a synthetical structure, and observe the effect of the word in all of them; and if that effect was apparently different, I would by comparison, attempt to reconcile the difference, or find a point of resemblance in the various meanings of the word, and that point of resemblance I should take to be the *real original meaning* of the word.

P. Very well, George; that would be a rational and fair induction. I am pleased with your method of conducting the enquiry, and think that you would rarely fail of success. Every language is its own best lexicographer. Let us return to the phrases in which *with* occurs;

Bread *with* meat.

G. It must mean *in company* or *connexion.*

P. It means a *band* or *tie,* which you know, connects or binds things together.*

Analysis the fourteenth.

No. 1. *To learn* is useful.

2. John loves *to learn.*

G. In the first example, *to learn,* seems to be a nominative case, and in the other, an objective.

P. Yes. The Infinitive Mood of a verb is a noun verbalized by the little word *to* put before it, and is generally used as an *abstract noun,* either in the nominative or objective case—"One verb governs another that follows it, or depends upon it, in the infinitive mood"—and,—"The

* *Withan* the verb to *bind* or *tie* or *connect,* is obsolete, but the noun *with* or *wythe,* is still in reputable use.

infinitive mood, or part of a sentence, is frequently taken as the nominative to a verb."

G. But what is the little word *to?*

P. It is a preposition or *prepositive*, the definition of which you already know.

G. But I am not now to be satisfied with the information conveyed by a general term, the name of a class. "Man is an animal"—so is a Monkey. You have taught me to set its true value on this sort of general knowledge, I hope.

P. The word *to* means to do, to act, to end, or terminate. When prefixed to nouns thus forming a verb, as to the noun drink, or love,—*to* drink, *to* love, we see that it means to *do* or *act* the *thing*, to which it is prefixed. When it does not have the effect of verbalizing the noun, it indicates that the noun following it, is the end, object, or termination of the preceding action: as, "John went *to* town."

G. The town, is the end, or termination, to his act of going.

P. If you will turn to Doctor Johnson's dictionary, you will find, that all the various meanings given to the word *to* by the Doctor, are easily resolvable into one of these, or into the other; and we see and can reconcile its use, as a prefix in forming verbs, and in associating with or governing, (as it is termed,) the objective case of nouns and pronouns.

DIALOGUE THE 16th.

P. We will now turn our attention to phrases contained in a single word.

G. The words, consequently, must be complex signs.

P. Some of them certainly are very complex. They are called adverbs, and "require an appropriate situation in the sentence." The greater part of them are formed from words belonging to the other grammatical classes; indeed the adverb class seems to be *the asylum* in the literary commonwealth: for, we are very gravely told by a learned ancient author, that "every part of speech, when it leaves off being, or ceases to be what it is, *turns into an adverb.*"*

G. This is like the ghost, in Mr. Addison's comedy, that never appeared but in *the shape* of *the sound* of a drum! In the form of an adverb, I hope we shall seize the Proteus of language.

P. And force him to disclose the truth, returning to his proper form.† So many words have left off being what they *once were*, that I doubt, George, whether you can recognise, in their old fashioned dresses, many of your intimate acquaintances.

G. There are hardly any English words so changed, that I shall not know them. Shew me some of these reverend seniors, and see if I do not recognize them without a formal introduction.

* Omnis pars orationis, quando desinit esse quod est, migrat in adverbium." *Servius.*

† "Verum ubi nulla fugam reperit fallacia victus,
"In sese redit, atque hominis tandem ore locutus."—*Virgil.*

P. Here they are—Heaulme—Yn—Weir—Seynge—Yor.

G. I do not know them.

P. They are the modern words—*Helmet—in* or *within—war*—seeing—your.* Read this sentence—"Thanne thei shulen bigynne to seie to mounteyns falle ye doun on us: and to litil hillis hile ye us."†

G. Indeed I should not know this to be English.

P. You could not read a page in the book from which this is extracted, without a glossary. What think you of "*Hileden*" for *healed* or *covered,* "*Gederiden*" for *cured,* "*Moneth*" for *month,* "*Eareth*" for that which is *ploughed,* now called earth.

G. These words afford ample proof of the changes which the language has undergone.

P. They do; and you will observe that in most instances, the change has been made for the sake of brevity of form in the written sign, or for ease of pronunciation in the sound. The abridged forms and the changes in sound, have been gradually, and almost imperceptibly introduced, so that little inconvenience or misconception has been produced. Use rendered each successive change intelligible, until at last the fragments of a sentence, or a single complex word served to excite all the ideas formerly represented by a regular sentence, or by many of them. If all this had been done at one time, and by one operation, the new formations would have been unintelligible, and would have been considered as forming another and a new language. Many of our words have in a series of years, undergone changes so numerous and various, that we have lost all knowledge of the original words; and are therefore unable to trace many modern ones to their roots. Many also have been so combined, compounded and twisted to-

* See note K, at the end of the book

† Luke, chap. 23d, v. 30th.—*Old Translation.*

gether, that the original materials cannot be distinguished.

> "So spins the silk worm small, her slender store,
> And labours till it clouds itself all o'er."

Our ignorance, and not our knowledge, has directed the classification of many words, and perhaps has greatly increased the number of our classes. The existence of new formations in other languages, furnish us with numerous analogous instances in proof of these observations, in regard to our own tongue.*

G. Let us examine some of the adverbs if you please, for I wish to be better acquainted with their character.

P. As they are said to qualify other words, we will take them in connexion with such as they affect.

Analysis the fifteenth.

No. 1. John is ***very*** active.
2. He runs ***rapidly.***

G. I think that ***very*** means ***in a great degree;*** for very thirsty, very hungry, very true, mean thirsty, hungry, true, in a great degree.

P. You have approximated to the meaning, or rather run parallel with it; though no person acquainted with its meaning would choose to associate it with ***true,*** because ***very*** means, or rather formerly meant ***true*** or ***truly.*** It is the last change upon the word ***verum,*** which became successively ***veré, veray, vrai, very.*** Douglass, not a very ancient writer, used ***veray,*** and Chaucer wrote ***very*** an ad-

*"Observato ordine rerum, necesse est, res et actiones *prius* fuisse *natas* et *expressas*. *Particulas in sua infantia fuisse* vel *verba*, vel *nomina*, vel *adverbia ex nominibus* formata."—*Hoogeveen.*

These particles have had a singular growth, it seems: In their *infancy* they were *words of might*, in their *manhood*, they "have no meaning of their own," according to Mr Harris and other grammarians. *See Harris's Hermes, on prepositions, conjunctions, &c.*

jective, in the same cases in which we now use true: as, "*a very sentence,*" for *a true sentiment.*

G. The adverbs ending in *ly* are very numerous, and I suspect that this termination *ly* adds the same idea to all of them.

P. It does; when I inform you that this *ly* was formerly written separately, and without contraction was spelled *lyke,* then *like,* and lastly was contracted into *ly,* and incorporated with those words which together with it produced the sentific suggestion, you will readily understand its force and effect whenever it may occur.

G. The matter is plain enough, *rapidly, rapidlyke,* that is, like something rapid—*sweetly, sweetlyke*—like something sweet.

P. You cannot read a page in Chaucer, Douglass, Gascoigne, Gower, or Spencer, without observing the great change which the English language has undergone; and if you compare these authors with any of the modern writers, you will perceive that many words have become obsolete, and others have been formed, or introduced into the language: so much is language, as Dr. Campbell observes, a species of fashion. Yet the English critics object to the formation of any new word *by the Americans.*

G. Perhaps on the same grounds that the British ministry were unwilling, while we were their colonial subjects, to allow us to make a hob-nail.

P. I have no objection to receive their *manufactures,* either of words or iron, if they are better and cheaper than our own, and *happen to suit us.* Of this *we will* judge. But our neological rights are as independent of their controul, when we need, or think we need a new word, as our right to manufacture any other article of use or convenience. The English people are the last on the globe who should object to neological innovation, unless they mean kindly to warn others of the evils of their own practice.

G. I observe that in the grammars, the names of things, such as *yesterday—to-day—to-morrow*, &c. are classed with adverbs.

P. Yes; all words, the classification of which gave the grammarians any trouble, were thrown into the chaotic mass of synthetic combinations, which received a name sufficiently general to answer all the purposes of saving the labour of research, and of hazarding the task of explanation.

G. Does not Mr. Murray's definition give the meaning of the word adverb?

P. No. Mr. Murray's definition is much more limited and intelligible than the word itself. An adverb means a *word added*, without any specification of the purpose of such addition. He limits it to the expression of some quality or circumstance of "a verb, an adjective, or another adverb." You will at once perceive the complex character of such, as—*nevertheless—abroad—sideways—heretofore—always—may be—per-haps*, &c. and the materials of which they are formed, are not difficult to discover.

G. I think I can analyse them with little assistance; in all of them, there are words connected by the sentific suggestion.

P. I have considered adverbs as phrases rather than words, from the complex character of most of them, and because the parts in the *complex single words* are the signs of distinct ideas connected by the sentific suggestion, in the same manner as separate words in phrases are connected by it. They are said to "require an appropriate situation in the sentence." But, you must not conclude that this *rule* is exclusively applicable to them. The relative location of every word in a sentence should be such, that the sentific suggestion will arise from it, and whatever other word is the sign of an idea or of ideas, intended to be connected with it. In concluding this conversation, I must

remark to you, that our analysis have not been so much intended to supply you with information, as with the proper means and method of acquiring it—they are not to supercede, but to assist your future investigations. They, however, briefly illustrate the common traits of resemblance in simple and compound sentences, and the difference between them. The invariable effect of the nominative and the verb, in the production of the sentific suggestion—the consequences of that effect on the number and person of the verb—the use and importance of that particular class of simple sentences which you denominated simple synthetical sentences, (phrases that modify sentences in which the words are connected by what I have termed the *secondary* sentific suggestion, to distinguish it from the state of mind produced by the nominative and verb;) and lastly, the *adverb*, the most complicated and comprehensive sign in language. I hope you have not failed to discover that Declension, Comparison, Conjugation, &c. are nothing more than ingenious contrivances, to express in one word, or in a few words, several ideas.

G. I have discovered even from what I know of them, that they answer that purpose. And I have not forgotten a casual remark of yours, on a former occasion, that the Romans availed themselves of such contrivances more than we do, for they have *one word* that means *a man*, another *of a man*, or *man's*, another *to a man*, &c.; and that in their verbs, one word means—*they might be loved.*

P. Your memory is correct; they had more complex words than we have in proportion to the number of words in their language and ours.

DIALOGUE THE 17th.

P. Having slightly investigated the structure of sentences and phrases, we come now to Words. We have seen that the various relations of these to each other, arising in the mind from their successive pronunciation or written signs, produce sense or discourse. It cannot be doubted, I think, that the relations or connexions of words are *states of the mind*, excited in us by the words themselves, in the same manner as thoughts about any other objects of perception arise in the mind, when the objects are present to our senses. "There is nothing in nature but *mind* and *matter*, things and feelings; what we call *relations* are the feelings of the mind, produced by things perceived as they exist in *space* or *time*."

G. All words then, must be the signs of objects of perception, or of feelings of the mind.

P. Yes; and feelings of the mind *are things*, the existence of which we can no more doubt, than we can the existence of objects of perception. We are so constituted that we *must believe* in the evidence of our senses, and of our consciousness, whether we will or not.

G. In what you have said, I find the basis for a system of classification entirely different from that of Mr. Murray. There would be two classes of words: the one comprehending the signs of objects of perception, and the other the signs of states of the mind.

P. That is to say, Physical and Metaphysical words. I see no great advantage which would result from this arrangement, or indeed from any other which does not as-

sist us in ascertaining the roots of words, and the arbitrary laws of custom which have obtained in the subsequent formations from them. Radical words must be considered individually; formations from them may be classed according to the prefix, termination, or change. For instance: when *s* with an apostrophe is added to a word, no matter what may be the root, you know that the idea of property or possession is incorporated with it; when *ly* is added as a termination, likeness is denoted. Classifications of this kind assist us very much in learning languages. But although we may know from analogy, that a word is a noun or verb or adverb, and may be able correctly to class all the formations from it, yet this knowledge will not enable us to use the word, or to understand it when used by others. To know, *not to what class of signs* it belongs, but *of what thing or things* it is *the sign*, is indispensable to its use, and absolutely necessary, in order to understand what we hear and read. Indeed we use *words* instead of the *things* of which they are the signs, in thinking and reasoning, and thus they become instruments of thought. How important is it then, that we should neither be ignorant of, nor misconceive their meaning. We believe that reason rules words; but it also happens that words re-act upon reason.*

G. I know that the use of one word often introduces a whole train of thought; the word *aid*, which you used in a former conversation, led my thoughts from the subject of our examination to camps and fields of war.

P. The association of ideas or simple suggestion, of which you have given an instance, is thus beautifully and faithfully described by Dr. Akenside—

> "For when the diff'rent images of things
> By chance combin'd, have struck the attentive soul

* "Credunt homines rationem suam verbis imperare; sed fit etiam, ut verba vim suam super rationem retorqueant."—*Bacon.*

With deeper impulse, or, *connected long*,
Have drawn her frequent eye; howe'er distinct
The external scenes, yet oft the ideas gain
From *that conjunction*, an *eternal tie*
And sympathy unbroken. Let the mind
Recal *one partner* of the various league,
Immediate, lo! the *firm confederates* rise,
And each his former station straight resumes;
One movement governs the consenting throng,
And all at once with rosy pleasure shine,
Or all are sadden'd with the glooms of care."

If then, a word becomes associated with any thing of which it is not the customary sign, or if it includes more or less, we may deceive ourselves in reasoning if we use it as an instrument of thought, and may fail to convey to the minds of others by its use, what we would have them to understand. Most of our disagreements of opinion are not to be attributed to different states of the mind, produced by the same objects of perception, so much as to different views of the same objects, and to different meanings attached to the same word. Men seldom differ in opinion, when they include in the same expressions only the same elements of thought.* In speaking and writing, there is often a mental reference to something *not expressed*, but existing in the mind of the speaker or writer; and unless from similar associations, the same reference to the same ideas happens to be made by the hearer or reader, the speech or writing is not understood. So strongly is something expressed, associated with something not expressed, that the writer is astonished to find that he is not understood, while the reader is vainly attempting to find *in the expression* that meaning which existed only *in the mind of the writer*. For an illustration, I will read to you a sentence composed by an able writer,† in which he has *expressed* precisely what he did

* See note L, at the end of the book.

† Addison.—*Spectator*, No. 411.

not intend to express; and yet he is understood as he wished to be, by most persons, because they are led into a similar train of thought, and do not discover that the *intended* sense is not conveyed by the expression, but by mental reference to something not expressed.

G. Read the sentence if you please.

P. Here it is,—"There are indeed but very few who know how to be idle and innocent, or that have a relish of any pleasures that are not criminal; every diversion they take, is at the expense of some one virtue or other, and their very first step out of business, is into vice or folly."

G. I think that I understand this sentence, although there appears to me to be one inaccuracy, and one omission in it. I would have said, "have a relish *for* any pleasures," and I would have introduced *which* or *that* after the word "*diversion.*" Notwithstanding these slight faults, the sentence seems to me to convey the meaning of the writer.

P. What is his meaning?

G. Why, that most people do not know how to be idle and innocent, but step out of business into vice or folly.

P. That is what he *intended to express;* but what he has actually expressed, means that *the few who know how to be idle and innocent,* are *the persons* whose every diversion is taken at the expense of some one virtue or other, and whose very first step out of business, is into vice or folly. You made the same mental reference to *the many* who know not how to be idle and innocent, and who were present to the mind of the writer when he composed the latter part of the sentence, that he did when he used the word "*they.*" He plainly intended that word to represent *the many* or *most people not expressed,* but *thought of;* whereas it represents the contra-distinguished "*few,*" and gives to the sentence a meaning the reverse of that which he intended.

G. I see it now; but on a cursory examination, few I believe could discover the error. It often happens, that from a word or two, I can ascertain the wishes of children who are learning to speak. In those cases I suppose, we fall into the train of their associations.

P. Or, are assisted by their gestures, or by previous knowledge of their wants; but in many cases *where facts are stated*, we cannot without a previous knowledge of the relative state of things, understand the bearing and sense of plain expressions. Do you remember the adventure of the two Scotchmen, mentioned in one of the late newspapers?

G. I do not.

P. It will serve to illustrate my last remark, though I shall not be able to give you the story in the exact words of the relation. Two Scotchmen were out in a forest, when they discovered the lair of a wild sow, in a cave having a very narrow entrance. One of them descended to get the young, while the other kept watch for the dam. Attracted by the cries of the young ones, she soon appeared, and after a rencounter with the sentinel, was forcing herself through the entrance of the cave. The man within, finding all light in a moment excluded, and ignorant of the cause, cried out "what keeps out the light?" The reply from without was—"If the tail breaks ye'll soon see that!" Little did the poor fellow in the cave suspect, that not only light, but life depended on the strength of the sow's tail, which his friend had seized as she entered the cave, and was attempting to pull her back by it with all his force. Without information of what was passing at the mouth of the cave, the man within must have thought the answer to his question as to the exclusion of the light, exceedingly odd and impertinent; yet it was a very forcible and pertinent reply, and would have been so considered by him, if he had been aware of the facts upon which it

was founded. Words then, are not always significant, without a knowledge of the relations existing among the things of which they are the signs. The bishop of Beller, asked the famous Spanish poet Lopez de Vega, to explain one of Vega's own sonnets, which the bishop said he had often read, but never understood. Lopez de Vega read the sonnet several times, and frankly acknowledged that he did not understand it himself. A discovery, says Dr. Campbell, which the poet probably never made before. The cases in which "*nonsense* so often escapes being detected, both by the writer and by the reader," are, says Dr. Campbell,* first, where there is an exuberance of metaphor; secondly, where the terms most frequently occuring denote things which are of a complicated nature, and to which the mind is not sufficiently familiarized; and thirdly, where the terms employed are very abstract, and consequently of a very extensive signification.

G. All these cases seem to amount to nothing more than the use of a complex word or phrase, without regard to the elements of thought included in the compound, and some of which, if analysed, would be found incapable of producing the sentific suggestion intended to be produduced.

P. This seems to be a nearly accurate statement of the truth, and I hope that you will be very careful in ascertaining the elements of all complex words and phrases, and in fixing precisely, in all figurative words, the idea of resemblance, before you use them in connexion with other words.

G. I will

> "Reduce all things to acts, and
> "Know their natures and abstracts,
> "Where entity and quiddity,
> "The ghosts of defunct bodies fly."†

* Philosophy of Rhetoric, chap. 7th.

† Butler.

P. Unless you do the very reverse of this, and reduce the acts, &c. to things, you will have nothing left but the ghosts of defunct theories, hunted and driven out of the world by that great Nimrod, Induction.

DIALOGUE THE 18th.

G. The observations which you made in our last conversation, seemed to me to be of a very general kind.

P. Indeed! Then you think they would have served Moses Primrose for an answer to his father's question, of what he thought of "matters and things in general," much better than the reply of poor Moses, limited as it was, to the cyder-press and brewing tubs of farmer Williams. I hope, however, that you will not find them too general to be useful. A traveller is frequently assisted by general directions as to course and distance, even when he is furnished with a sketch of his road, on which sketch every cross-path and diverging way are delineated.

The words called Interjections, or the sounds so called, cannot be considered as parts of *conventional language.* They merely denote some indefinite, or some indefinable emotion. They are common to us with brutes, which send forth sounds indicative of pleasure, surprise or pain. When a sound has a meaning, it is no interjection, and may readily be referred to some other class of words. Such words are, behold! hark! hush! away! strange! really! Of

nouns, I shall say much more, as "a noun is the name of any thing that exists, or of which we have any notion: as London, man, virtue," heat, fire, love, rage, aversion, connexion, reflection, assembly, multitude, thought, action, passion, suffering, &c.

G. What an extensive class! It seems to me that it includes all things in matter and mind, and as these are all the things of which we have any knowledge, I should think that all words, the "signs of ideas," must be included in it, and that the other classes are sub-divisions of this. But I now recollect, that I must avail myself of the grammatical classifications, to obtain the information collected by the grammarians. I can *then* make such arrangements as will assist me most, in the preservation and use of my acquired materials.

P. Yes, you may; every individual who acquires a knowledge of the operations of his own mind, can do this better for himself than any other person can do it for him. The first division of nouns is into *proper* and *common* nouns. Proper nouns serve to distinguish *one individual* of a class, from other individuals of the same class—as your proper name *George* distinguishes *you* from other boys. A common noun is the name of a class: as, *boy*, which you know belongs equally to all the individuals in whom are found the resembling ideas, of which the word *boy* is the sign.

G. Then I have *two names.* My common undistinguishing name *boy*, and my distinguishing proper name George.

P. Very well. The names of all things *in matter*, that is, the names of all objects of perception, may be termed *Physical* nouns: and those which are the names of things *in mind*, *Metaphysical* nouns. These two classes, Physical and Metaphysical nouns, correspond to the names of things "that exist," and to the names of those, of

which "we have a notion," in Mr. Murray's disjunctive definition of a noun.

G. I understand it; then, the word *George* is a *physical noun proper*, and *boy* is a *physical noun common.*

P. Yes; and although the word *boy* is *the name of a state of mind* produced by observed resemblance, yet, as this state of the mind is often produced by a comparison of *objects of perception*, in such cases the name of the state of the mind is termed a *physical noun common.* These physical nouns common, are often used you know, as the sign of one of a class as well as of the class itself—as, *a boy* meaning any one of the class. The names by which we designate individual and particular *states of the mind*, such as the elementary faculties, emotions, passions and principles of action *which can have no plural*, such as Consciousness, Anger, Hatred, Patience, Fortitude, Courage, are *Metaphysical nouns proper;* and the names of those feelings or states of the mind which are used in the plural number, such as principle, virtue, comfort, danger, &c. are *Metaphysical nouns common.*

G. When an individual of a class has no proper name, we add to *the name of the class some other word* to distinguish the individual intended: as, this dog—that man.

P. We frequently add more than one word, descriptive or defining: as, the little pointer dog—a tall young man. We sometimes use a proper name as the name of a class: as, a Solomon, the Alexanders—John is no Solomon,—these generals would be the Alexanders of the world.

G. In these cases, the proper name ceases to denote an individual, and is extended to points of resemblance. The meaning is very plain when we know the points of resemblance intended to be expressed, and they generally are traits of character for which the persons were remarkable.

P. A proper name is sometimes verbalized: as,

"Sternhold himself, he *out-Sternholded.*"

G. That means he excelled Sternhold himself, in that for which Sternhold was remarkable.

P. It does. We often use the same word to denote an object or an action: as, I saw *the fight*—I saw *them fight*. In the first case *fight* is a noun, in the last a verb. Nothing is more common than the use of nouns in connexion with other nouns, as if the first were adjectives: as, an iron bolt, a silver spoon, a brass button, a pewter bason, a stone floor, a wood house, a wool hat. In these cases the prefixed words iron, silver, &c. are classed with adjectives by grammarians, or are said to be nouns used adjectively.

G. They seem to me to be the signs of the *same ideas* as if they were used by themselves, to denote the substances of which they are the names. I can, therefore, have no reason to class them with adjectives; on the contrary, I think I shall be very much disposed to class adjectives with nouns—for that which is a quality or expresses a quality must be a thing. I cannot conceive how *nothing* can express a quality.

P. Of this hereafter. Our business at present, is with words admitted to be nouns. The present participles of verbs, such as reading, writing, running, fighting, &c. are called participial nouns in such cases as these—His *writing* is legible—His *writings* are popular—*Running* is a violent exercise—You are fond of *running*. The infinitive mood too, of every verb, is a noun: as, "*To acquire* knowledge is pleasant."

G. From these instances, I learn that the same word has not one invariable character, but sometimes belongs to one class and sometimes to another.

P. That is to say, that the same word is not always the sign of the same thing or state of mind. You cannot therefore determine in any particular case to what grammatical class any word belongs, until you have ascertained what it is the sign of, in that particular case. This is noth-

ing more than to know the meaning of a word, in whatever combination it occurs. Were you required to class the word *bear*, you could not do it until you knew whether it was used as the sign of the animal so called, or of an action. How different are the states of mind excited by its use in these two sentences!—"*Bear* me to some lonely wood"—"I saw a *bear* in the lonely wood." We not only class objects of perception, but feelings of the mind; and when different words or signs excite the same sort of feeling, we class the signs together. When I say a *running horse*, a *fighting man*, the same feeling in one respect is excited—that of *active quality* attributed to the horse and man. But when I say "*running* and *fighting* require activity and strength," the feeling of attributed quality is not excited, but of action in the abstract. In the first cases, running and fighting, would be classed with participial adjectives, and in the last, with participial nouns.

G. It is very clear, that we cannot determine to what grammatical class any word belongs in any given case, if such word is used as the sign of more than one idea, without previously ascertaining the state of mind it is intended to express in that given case: and this can be done only by an examination of the synthesis in which it occurs. The relations felt to exist between it, and the ideas excited by the other words connected with it, determine its meaning. In the same manner, having ascertained the effect of *any part* in a machine, we find that the *same material* in the same shape, if made the part of another machine, having different combinations, will produce a very different effect.

P. Daniel De Foe uses two nouns and a preposition to produce the effect of one adjective, and yet the expression is perfectly intelligible. He denominates a sail shaped like a shoulder of mutton, a "shoulder of mutton sail."

To class words then, and to parse them, you must determine their *relation* to other words.*

G. And to learn grammar *by rote,* is to observe, to compare, to combine, to reflect, to reason by rote—operations beyond my powers of comprehension.

P. Notwithstanding the *use* of the same word as the sign of different things, and the consequent classification of it sometimes with one kind of words, and sometimes with another, still the word itself remains the same. A piece of wood or iron is still wood or iron, no matter to what use it may be applied: so the original words of every language will be found, I think, to be signs each of one thing. They were afterwards used as signs of analogous things, in the same manner in which we use an instrument at hand to perform the work of one which is not at hand.

G. As we use a drawing-knife instead of a plane.

P. In the secondary formations or derivate words, we have proof positive that words entirely new have not been invented always, to express new ideas. We use old words with some little change or addition, whenever they can be made to answer the purpose. Now when we are enquiring into the materials of language, we shall more probably succeed by seeking for the original meaning of words, than by regarding the subsequent uses to which they have been applied, or secondary formations from them. These must also be understood to speak and write well. But in ascertaining the original meaning of radical words, we obtain the key to all this information, and also have some chance of discovering the foundation of the fabric of language.

* See note M, at the end of the book.

DIALOGUE THE 19th.

P. In our last conversation, I said nothing to you of the Gender, Number and Case of Nouns, or of primitive and derivative nouns. To the observations which I made in a former conversation, on the Gender of Nouns naturally neuter, I shall add nothing more; but I refer you to Mr. Murray for any further information on the subject. The English language is not one stream, flowing from one fountain, but a confluence of many streams from many fountains. The Tuetonic, Macso-Gothic, Anglo-Saxon, Danish, Norman French, Greek, Latin, Dutch, Modern French, Italian or Modern Latin, and indeed the languages of all the modern nations with whom we or our English ancestors have had commerce or connexion, enter into the composition of that mixture of words which we call the English Language. Hence the various and differing rules of formation, the apparent irregularities, and seeming anomalies, which present themselves to us, both in speech and in written compositions. He who would understand, reconcile and explain them, must trace these mingled streams to their points of junction, and thence to their fountains. This has been done by very few, if by any; and I am sorry to tell you that the study of the ancient languages, from which our own languague has derived most of its materials, has been entirely neglected in this country. We never have had teachers of the Tuetonic, Maeso-Gothic, or even of the Anglo-Saxon. The derivative, and more modern languages than the Tuetonic, that is to say, Greek and Latin, &c. have received more attention. But

they are not so generally studied as formerly, while the study of Hebrew is mostly confined to the Clergy. The force of these remarks, you will perceive, from the consideration of the various methods of forming the plural of nouns. These methods are not the simple contrivances of one unmixed language, but the adopted methods of different languages. Thus we have plurals formed by the addition of *s* to the singular: as *hat, hats*—by the addition of *es*, where *s* alone cannot be easily sounded: as *fox, foxes*—when the *s*, if added, would have the sound of *es*—by adding *en:* as *ox, oxen—chick, chicken*—or by changing *a* into *e:* as *man, men.* We have *cherub, cherubim—seraph, seraphim—phenomenon, phenomena—genius, genii—memorandum, memoranda—datum, data—beau, beaux—bateau, bateaux,* &c. &c.

G. I should suppose that these different methods have been adopted from different languages; for no one nation in forming a language would invent and nse so many dissimilar methods to accomplish one object.

P. With foreign words we have also adopted their *accidents,* as the grammarians call the changes of words into other words, to express some additional idea. How the mere learner of modern English can arrive at any satisfactory conclusion in relation to these various formations, I am at a loss to conceive.

G. I recollect a conversation in Ivanhoe, between Gurth and Wamba, in which the introduction of many Norman words is mentioned, such as *veau* or *veal* for *calve* or *calf, boeuf* or *beef* for *ox, pork* for *swine,* &c.

P. The able writer of that interesting novel, in the conversation which you have mentioned, has availed himself, as in many other instances, of important facts in the history of his country, to amuse and instruct us. Indeed a great mass of historical truth is embodied in his productions, so beautifully cloathed in the drapery of fancy, that while it

possesses the force of reality, it has all the facination of fiction. He not only affords to us amusement of the most elegant and attractive kind, but much useful information; and has induced many persons to read historical works, which but for him they would never have opened. In his Waverly, you will find some observations on education well worth your serious attention. You have read an abridged history of England, and no doubt remember the Conquest by William of Normandy. The Norman language was then introduced, as the Saxon and Danish had been before, and these three languages mingled in various proportion with the tongue spoken in England.

G. It is plain then, that he who would thoroughly understand the mixture which we speak, must acquire some knowledge of the elements which compose it.

P. Let us return to our subject. We sometimes take away the final *f* of a singular noun; and to the remainder add *ves* to form the plural: as, *loaf—loaves*—sometimes we take away the final *y*, and add *ies:* as, *fly—flies.* You will find several other methods of forming the plural in Mr. Murray's grammar, which are customary. He also mentions some which have no plural, and others which have no singular. The reason of this will be obvious to you from the examples cited by him. There are some words of ambiguous number, being the signs, either of one or more; when any one of them is used, we easily ascertain whether one or more be meant by its relation to other words in the sentence: as, *this sheep—these sheep.* Here is *a deer*—here are *deer.*

G. It has occurred to me, since you have mentioned the mixed character of our language, that the question, whether there are any words in it of exactly the same meaning, may be satisfactorily determined.

P. How?

G. By ascertaining whether we have adopted the different signs of different nations to indicate the *same thing*, or have introduced a foreign word to express any idea which already had a representative word in our own language.

P. Affectation, the love of novelty, the desire to appear learned, and the disposition to speak a language different from that of the vulgar, as well as a taste for musical expression, and a judicious appropriation of terms distinguishing the blended shades of thought, have caused the introduction and use of many words which we might have done without; just as we import a broad-cloth coat, when a home-spun one would have suited us as well. Men are not satisfied with necessaries; we have luxuries in our language, as well as on our sideboards. Perhaps though, most of the synonymes in our language (for we have many,) may be traced to the introduction of foreign words, such as, *rect-angle* for *right-angle—annual* for *yearly—sanguinary* for *bloody—quadruped* for *four-footed* &c.

G. I suppose too, from what you said in our last conversation, that *derivative* words are more numerous than *primitives.*

P. Yes. The greater number of words in all languages, are derivative; the primitives or roots, as they are called, bearing a very small proportion to the subsequent formations from them. The subsequent formations are most commonly *compounds of the parts* of the primitives, blended for the sake of brevity, and used as substitutes for the several primitives compounded. In this way, one word becomes the representative of many. As single words have thus become more comprehensive, their elements, character, and classification, have become more difficult of determination. These and *the abbreviations* of *single words*, and the *altered orthography* and *pronunciation* of others, have caused as much labour and perplexi-

ty to lexicographers and critics, as the *Niger* has done to travellers.

G. Well sir, although I do not wish you to tumble over a critical cataract, or to lose yourself in the sandy deserts of Etymology, I should be pleased if you would take one radical word, and trace it through its modern metamorphoses.

P. Perhaps it will be better to begin with a modern formation, and ascend through the changes, from son to father.

G. As you please.

P. I like always to proceed from what is near and known, to what is more remote and less known. In reading history, we should for this reason begin with that of our own time; and in revising, we should begin where we have *ended with ancient history*, and descend to the point where we commenced. By this method, we better understand the connexion and dependence of events, in their relation of antecedents and consequents. The advantage to be derived from reading history, you have been told is to fore-know the *future* from an accurate knowledge of the *past*, and to bring about what is wished, by the preparation of antecedents which we have ascertained to be uniformly succeeded by such events as we would produce. Now the approximation to certainty which we will make in the knowledge of the characters of men, in the tendency of actions, in the course of events, &c. will be in proportion to the accuracy with which we *generalize* from facts, and the justness of the limits which we fix to the general truths deduced. But to return from this digression, I will take for our purpose, the adverb *insignificantly*, and although I may not trace the whole generation through all the direct and collateral branches, yet I will present to you enough for the illustration of this truth, that the same *radical* word is in many more modern formations, than you have heretofore thought. From *insignificantly*, take away

the prefix *in*, which you know often means *not* or *negation*, as in the words *inactive*, *inconvenient*, &c. and we have *significantly*. Take away the suffix, or termination *ly*, which you know means *lyke*, and we have *significant*. Take away *ficant*, a formation from a latin verb found in many of our words, as in *modify*, *satisfy*, meaning to *make* or *become*, and we have *signi*. Take away the final letter *i*, the latin termination of the genitive or possessive case of their word *signum*, and we have the English word *sign*, synonymous with the Latin signum, the Greek semeion, the French signe, the Spanish séna, the Italian segno. Words which differ so little in sound and orthography, and denote the *same thing* in all these languages, must, we conclude, have had one common origin. The Saxon too, is *sigel*.

G. I see plainly then by ascertaining the roots that are common to many languages, we have only to learn their *methods* of *subsequent formations* from the roots, and we become acquainted with all the kindred words in these languages. This must be the most expeditious, as well as the most satisfactory method of acquiring all the languages having the same roots.

P. Let us now descend to the derivatives, or subsequent formations and compounds of the word *sign*, which for aught I know, may itself be a derivative or compound. I will mention only such as belong to our own language. It has many descendants in all the languages which I have just said, contain it.

Sign—signing—signed—signer.
Signet—sigel—seal—sealer—sealing—sealed.
Sign-al—ize—ly—ity—ised—ising, &c.
Sign-ation—acle—atory—ature, &c.
Sig-les—(initial letters put for whole words.)
Sign-ify—ificant—ificantly—ificance.
Sign-ifying—ed—er—cation—cative—catory—ly, &c.

With the prefixes, *as—con—de—re—en—pre—in*, we have—

As-sign-ment—ation—er—ee—ed—ing—able—atory—ly—ative—icatory—icable, &c.

Con-sign-ment, &c.; six at least in family.

De-sign-er, &c.; nine compounds.

Re-sign-ed, &c.; six compounds.

En-sign—s—ia.

Pre-sign—ify, &c.

In-sign—ificant—ificance—ificantly.

In addition to these, we have *signless, signboard, sign-post*, &c.

G. Our pronunciation prevents us from recognising the radical in many words, I believe; for, if *signification* was pronounced *sign-ification* instead of *sig-nification*, I should have known that the word *sign* was a part of it, which I never even suspected. There are, it seems, more than eighty English words of which the word *sign* is a part.

P. Yes, there are; and consequently, the meaning of that word constitutes a part of the meaning of them all. The various prefixes and terminations are not unmeaning additions: each of them has its own individual signification. You now see what a *complex term* one word, such as *insignificantly*, may be; representing many words, and conveying the same and as much meaning as all the words contained in it would do, if separately used. And you also perceive, in how many words the same root is to be found. All complex words are the signs, not of things, nor of thought, but of other words. They are representatives that express the sentiments of their constituents. To consider them as simple signs, is to mistake a mass for an elementary principle, and leads us from the only means of understanding it—the analysis of the mass, and the detection of its elements. The same process, in a greater or

less degree, has been carried on in all languages. Become thoroughly acquainted with any one language, and few difficulties will present themselves to you in the acquisition of other languages. The minds, *not of individuals*, but *of nations*, are so much alike, that the *principles* will be found to be nearly the same in all tongues.

G. I have seen it written somewhere, that there are not forty thousand words in our language. Now if we divide forty thousand by eighty, the quotient will be five hundred; so that if the other radical words have as many derivatives as the word *sign*, there wood be but five hundred roots in our language. What a treasure they would be!

P. From many roots there are not so many derivatives; from some there are perhaps more; you cannot, from the data which you now possess, make any calculation of the number of primitives. I have said enough on this subject, in addition to what you will find in Mr. Murray's grammar, to direct and facilitate your researches.

DIALOGUE THE 20th.

P. To what has been said of the *Cases* of nouns, in our conversations on the analysis of sentences, little need now be added; and of *Person* I shall say nothing more, believing that you already understand all that is meant by that term in its grammatical acceptation. There are two points of view in which grammarians have considered *Case;* one

regarding *the form* of *words*, and the other the *relations* of *words*. All of them agree, I believe, to call the various changes made on the terminations of nouns, or the additions to them for the purpose of expressing an additional idea, the *cases* of *nouns*. These may be exemplified by the words *he, his, him*, or *John, John's*. *His* and *him* are denominated cases of *He*, and *John's* the possessive case of *John*. In these there is *change of form*. But change of relation, *condition*, or case, is often expressed without change of form: as, John hurt *James*—James hurt *John*. Here, although no change is made in the word James, and nothing is added to it, the situation, condition, or case of that word, is not the same in the two sentences. In the first sentence, James is the object hurt. In the last, he does the action of hurting. If we were, in the first instance, to use a pronoun instead of the proper name *James*, that pronoun would be in the objective case, thus: John hurt *him*. In the latter instance, the pronoun representing *James*, would be in the nominative case, thus—He hurt John. Nouns in our language undergo no change, to indicate whether they are *agents* or *objects;* yet the pronouns representing them, have different forms for this purpose. This circumstance has produced a diversity of opinion on the subject, which could never have arisen, if those who differed had ascertained whether they meant the same thing by the word *Case*.

G. Our nouns have by the admission of grammarians, a possessive or genitive.

P. Yes: as, *John's, Mary's, righteousness'*. Can you tell why in the last instance, the *'s*, is not added, and the apostrophe only, is used in writing?

G. I suppose the hissing sound which an additional *s* would give to the word, has caused its omission.

P. If added to such words as *righteousness*, in addition to the hissing sound it would give, the usual sound of those

plurals which end in *es*. When you call to, or address a person or thing personified, that person or thing is said by some grammarians to be in the Vocative case, and by others to be in the Nominative: as, "come here *George*," or, "I speak to you *George*," or,

> "Dear *Harp* of my country! farewell to thy numbers,
> This sweet wreath of song is the last we shall twine."

There are two forms of expression to which I invite your attention, while we are speaking of the cases of nouns: "*The mail having been lost*, we shall receive no letters to-day." "In consequence of the *mail's having been lost*, we shall receive no letters to-day." In the first instance the word *mail* is said to be in the nominative case, although associated with no personal tense of a verb, but with a participle. And in the last instance, it is in the possessive case.

G. The reason I think is plain, for when I say "*the mail having been lost*," the sentific suggestion arises in the same manner as if I had said, "*as the mail has been lost*."

P. In the second instance why should we not say—"In consequence of the *mail having been lost*," &c.?

G. Because in this instance, *having been lost*, means the previous *loss of the mail*, and it would not, I suppose, be according to reputable custom to say *mail loss*, when I mean *the loss of the mail* or *the mail's loss*. It seems to me though, that *mail's loss* is ambiguous; for it may mean the loss sustained by the mail, or the loss sustained by the mail-carrier.

P. The same ambiguity seems to result from the use of the preposition *of*. If I say "the loss of the captain, affected all his crew"—we cannot tell without a reference to other circumstances, whether, by losing their captain they were affected, or by some loss which their captain sus-

tained. You should avoid expressions which can possibly subject you to misconstruction by others. To excite in them the same state of mind which you have, is the object which you should attempt to accomplish by the use of words. All the *oblique cases*, or those formed from the nominative by change of form, are evidently derivative words, and therefore not simple signs, but complex terms, representing two other words at least. We sometimes find a plural word associated with a singular one, as in the expressions—a few years—"many a gem."

G. In these cases we wish to convey the idea of many, while at the same time we would say something of them individually, as in the last instance, or we wish to consider a multitude of individuals as *a mass*, as in the first instance.

P. In our next conversation, we will say something of Adjectives, a class of words very superficially treated of in our grammars. They are representatives, not of things, as the grammarians affirm, but of qualities or properties distinct from matter, yet mysteriously affecting it—distinct too from mind, yet modifying all its states.

DIALOGUE THE 21st.

P. "An Adjective is a word added to a Substantive, to express its quality."

G. To express *its* quality? Then the enquiry resolves itself into this—what are they which we call the *qualities of things:* for, of these, adjectives are the signs.

P. We know objects of perception by their elements, or by their relations to other things, that is, by the effect produced *by them* or *on them.* Indeed the name of any thing is only the sign of its collective elements, or of its relations, properties or qualities, as we denominate them. If you ask a person to define any word—ice for instance, he will either enumerate its elements, or describe its sensible properties; and among them, he would probably mention its low relative temperature, by saying that it is a *cold* substance. But other bodies produce the same sensation of cold, and consequently the same element of thought. A word then, (cold) became the sign of *the cause of a particular sensation* produced by bodies, without comprehending in its signification the *body* itself, which, or a part of which, produced the sensation; and because many bodies have the same effect, it has been thought that this mysterious something was no part of any of them, indeed nothing at all but the *quality of a thing.*

G. I see plainly that our power of abstraction is at the bottom of the whole mystery. We can think of some part, or cause, or effect, common to many things, without thinking of the whole thing, or of its other causes or effects; and then we confer an imaginary, separate and dis-

tinct existence on this creation of our brain, and call it *a quality*. We even consider our sensations themselves as mere effects, without regarding the necessary agency of the sentient power in ourselves: so much do we deal in abstractions.

P. We very often talk about the qualities, properties and powers of things, as if they were distinct from things themselves. We often use the words *cause, effect,* &c. but that you may not think or talk nonsense and myticism about them, hear what Dr. Brown says on this subject. "This is our meaning, when we speak of enquiring into the nature of a substance. We have *one* or *both* of *two* objects in view; *the discovery* of the *separate bodies* that co-exist in the substance, or rather *that constitute the substance,* which is nothing more than the separate bodies themselves, *or the discovery of that series of changes,* of which the presence of this particular substance *in some new relative position, with respect to other bodies forms* a part, the changes which other bodies in consequence of this altered relative position occasion *in it,* with the changes which it occasions in other bodies. I proceed then to consider what *it is,* which we truly have in view, when we direct our enquiry *not to the mere composition of objects* existing continuously in *space,* (for then we are attempting to discover the elementary substances composing the objects,) but to their susceptibilities of being affected by other substances, to the succession of changes which they exhibit in *time,* or their power of affecting other substances. The enquiry, as you must perceive, involves *the consideration of some words,* about which a peculiar mystery has been generally supposed to hang—*causation—power—connexion of events.* All that we mean when we ascribe to one substance a *power* of affecting another substance is, that when *it is present, a certain change will uniformly take place in that other substance. Power* in short, *is*

significant, not of any thing different from the invariable *antecedent* itself, but *of the mere invariableness* of the order of its appearance, in reference to some invariable *consequent; the invariable antecedent* being denominated *a cause, the invariable consequent, an effect.* The permanence and uniformity of the relation, are the essential circumstances. *To be that* which cannot exist without being instantly followed by a certain event, *is to be the cause* of the event as a correlative effect. This permanent relation, is all which constitutes *power.* It is not any thing that can exist separately from a substance, but is merely the substance itself considered in relation to another substance, in the same manner as what we denominate *form*, is not any thing separate from the elementary atoms of a mass, but *is merely* the relation of a number of atoms as co-existing in apparent contact.

In a former lecture, I alluded to the influence of errors with respect to the nature of *abstraction*, as *one* of *the principal causes that retard* the progress of Philosophy. We give a *name* to *some common quality* of many substances, and we then suppose that there is *in it* something real, because *we* have given *it a name*, and strive to discover what that is in itself which in itself has no existence. There is in nature only substances.*

G. I am delighted with this, because it coincides so exactly with the thoughts to which you had lead me. Before we commenced these conversations, I had been much perplexed with these ideal personages, *quality, cause, power, effect*, &c.; framing notions of what was neither a mass nor its elements, but *something* distinct from things, exercising a powerful agency in all the changes or effects of matter.

I now understand all that we can mean by such words as cold or hot, sweet or sour, or by such relative terms as

* Brown's Lectures, passim.

high or low, little or great. What produces sensation, or the sensation itself, must be a thing, if the old saying be regarded as correct, that "feeling's the truth." The corresponding signs, therefore, are *the names of things* or nouns. And our states of relative feeling or thought, produced by objects of perception, or previous states of the mind itself, give rise to words the signs of them. These words are metaphysical nouns.

P. What will you say of the secondary abstractions from adjectives, such as coldness, whiteness, length, breadth, sweetness, &c. which are called *nouns*, even by the grammarians?

G. They have no "local habitation" but "a name;" they are personifications of abstraction.

P. You class them then with ghosts and witches, as "nothing proves the non-existence of the bitches?"

G. Yes; for they are born of the same parent, and their power, independent of matter, is equal I believe.

P. What is the difference between these two expressions of thought?—The cold night has killed my geranium,—and the coldness of the night has killed my geranium.

G. The elements of thought seem to be the same, notwithstanding the personification of *cold* in the last instance, by the word *coldness.*

P. Another example will enable you to perceive clearly, the effect of *abstraction* in such cases as the last—The *white* horse runs—The *whiteness* of the horse runs.

G. The different effect of the two abstracts, is evident. When considered as an *adjective,* nothing is attributed to the abstract quality, but every thing to the noun with which it is joined. But when the abstract is a noun, every thing is attributed to it, and nothing to the noun in which the abstract exists.

P. In cases where *we knew* what we were talking about, such secondary abstractions as *coldness, sweetness,* &c. have been rarely formed. We say—a silver spoon,—a gold watch: but whoever heard of the *silverness,* or the *goldness* of any thing?

G. But the same word is sometimes used as an adjective in its primitive form, and also with some addition to it: as, a beech tree, or a *beechen* tree—wool or *woolen*—sweet, *sweetish.*

P. True, and these terminations *en* and *ish* have meanings of their own. The first is the obsolete participle of a verb, and means *being. Beechen* is therefore *being* beech. *Ish* is *as,* or *lyke*—sweetish as, or like that which is sweet. It is now confined in some cases to the expression of *slight* or *faint* resemblance.

G. I suspect that he who first joined the word *ish,* as a termination to *sweet,* considered it the sign of a separate existence, independent of all the sweet substances in nature.

P. I have no doubt of it. For, only a short time ago it was believed by many learned men, that such words as boy, man, horse, &c. which you know to be signs of *felt resemblance,* or of an individual possessing the common traits of resemblance, were the signs of actual beings existing independently of all the boys, men, and horses, in the world. It is no wonder then, that they thought *sweet, sour,* &c. also to be the names of things, which things, as they had never discovered them separate from matter, they called *qualities, attributes, properties,* &c. The Schoolmen called all these things that are "never caught alone," *universals.* You will be astonished to hear, that for centuries, the Schoolmen and Philosophers devoted themselves to the endless and impossible task of detecting in the *material world,* these things, existing no where but in sensation and thought. This phantom chase was denominated

Philosophy, afterwards *Metaphysics*. Priests and potentates joined in the pursuit, and consequently persecutions, murders and wars mingled with verbal controversy, argumentative discussion, and critical contest. Many unintelligible, mysterious, and equivocal terms were invented to suit the systems, and to favour the designs of the controversialists. The good and the wise became disgusted with their folly, and indignant at their wickedness and cruelty. Hence the prejudices which even now exist against metaphysical philosophy; although the term now denotes enquiries of a very different nature, and requires a method of investigation that cannot lead to the evil consequences which followed the controversies of the Schoolmen. We now know that the application of induction to the phenomena of the mind, has greatly advanced our knowledge, has increased our love of morality and religion, has assisted in the defence of the rights and liberties of mankind, and has caused an unexampled progress in the arts and sciences. *Thinking rightly has preceded acting rightly*. An age of invention and improvement has succeeded to ages of verbal controversy, and fierce contention. We seek not now, to discover essences, and forms, and qualities, distinct from matter, and universal genera and species either in the world of material things or in the regions of thought; but to ascertain from experience and observation external and internal, the relations of things, and the relations of thought: and from invariable and immediate antecedents, and invariable immediate consequents, to know the general laws of nature in regard to matter and to mind, or in other words, to become acquainted as far as our limited faculties permit, with those invariable successions in nature which constitute all the knowledge necessary to our existence, safety, and comfort, and with the will of our Creator in regulating the order of the Universe.

I have introduced to your notice these general observations, because in addition to their general application, they in a particular manner apply to that class of words which we are now examining. You must not mistake Mr. Murray's definition of an adjective, and suppose it is confined to the expression of the quality of substantives only. Like a nominative case, the adjective frequently relates to phrases and sentences; as, "To see the sun is pleasant"—"A desire to excel others in learning and virtue is commendable." Now George, what is *pleasant?* What is commendable?

G. Why, all in both sentences, that precedes the *verb is.*

P. Very well. I have said enough to enable you to understand all that is written in the grammars, on that class of words called adjectives. In a former conversation, I explained to you the nature and use of Comparison.

The idea that an abstract, the result of resemblance, and of generalization which you now know is an operation of the mind, should be considered as an object of perception, has been ridiculed in a way that I think will amuse you.

"Martin supposed *an universal* man to be like a knight of a shire, or a burgess of a corporation, that represented a great many individuals. His father asked him if he could not frame the idea of *an universal Lord Mayor?* Martin told him, that never having seen but *one Lord Mayor*, the idea of that Lord Mayor always returned to his mind: that he had great difficulty to abstract a Lord Mayor from his fur gown, and gold chain: Nay, that the horse he saw the Lord Mayor ride upon, not a little disturbed his imagination. On the other hand, Crambe, to shew himself of a more penetrating genius, swore that he could frame a conception of a *Lord Mayor*, not only without his horse, gown, and gold chain, but even *without stature, feature, colour, hands, head, feet, or any body,* which he supposed to be *the abstract of a Lord Mayor.*"*

* Martinus Scriblerus.

G. Crambe had sharp intellectual optics indeed.

P. Very sharp, for

> "Optics sharp it needs I ween,
> *To see what is not to be seen.*"

DIALOGUE THE 22d.

P. We come now to a class of words, declared by the grammarians to be *substitutes* for nouns: "A pronoun is a word used *instead of* a noun, to avoid the too frequent repetition of the same word."

G. A pronoun is then a deputy noun, and therefore as truly a noun in its character, as the word which it represents.

P. They are general terms of a complex signification, generally indicating persons or things: yet they are not always used to avoid repetition, but as the signs either of persons or things in certain relative situations. On meeting with a person whom you never saw before, and of whose name even, you are ignorant, how would you address him?

G. I should certainly use the term *You:* as for instance, I might say to him "how do *you* do?" Or if I were to enter a room, where persons were speaking of I knew not what person, thing, or feeling of the mind, I would ask "what is *it?*"

P. In these cases, the pronoun is not used to avoid repetition; and if it be a substitute, it represents we know not whom or what. They are mostly used *now* for the purpose mentioned in Mr. Murray's definition, but I am inclined to think, that they are general terms whose use is not limited to the prevention of repetition, or to the humble office of substitutes, but *directly* significant of persons and things as I said before, in certain relative situations. Some of them you know, such as *I, thou, you, he, she,* are not so significant of any particular person, as of the *relative situation* in which he may happen to be, when the term is used; and the two last mentioned, serve to designate the *gender* also. For as the relations change, the terms also are changed. You call yourself *I,* the person speaking *to you* calls the same person *you,* and another person speaking *of you,* uses the term *he.* Now as all these terms are applied to the same person, but *in different situations,* and are never applied to him but in those situations, and are also applied to other persons in those same situations, I conclude that these words are *signs of those situations,* and that the concomitant *idea of person* is *incidental* only. When they are used to avoid repetition, they not only stand for or relate to single words, but frequently represent or relate to phrases and sentences. If they were *invented* to avoid repetition, their formation must have been subsequent to that of the words which they represent; for I cannot conceive the idea of a representative for that which does not exist.

They would be synonymous with the constituent word, being invented for the sake of representation. But they are very old words, and evidently have the same root in many modern languages; whereas those words, the repetition of which they now avoid, are many of them modern words and of different origin.

It would be wonderful indeed if the Greek *ego*, the Latin *ego*, the Gothic, Anglo Saxon, and English *Ich*, *Ic*, *Ig*, *Ik*, *I*, the Spanish *Yo*, the French *Je*, and the Italian *Jo*, so co-incident in sound and orthography, and the same in signification, should have been invented by different nations, in different ages, to serve the same purpose. We are irresistibly forced to conclude that these words have one common origin. These languages then, are at least in regard to some of their words, descended from the same stock; and I am not disposed to think that in the scanty vocabulary of any original unmixed tongue, there were among their primary words any which are not the signs of things. Words representing other single words, and the compounds of these, are subsequent formations in all languages. And these subsequent formations are generally made not of *previously unmeaning sounds* then first used as signs, but from combinations of the parts or wholes of words, in use at the time of the new formations.*

As I do not know the Etymon of any of them, I shall merely enumerate those which most frquently occur, make a few observations on their use, and hazard a bare conjecture as to the origin of some of them, leaving you to gather any additional information from the grammarians.

* Instances of these subsequent formations in all modern languages are so common, that they do not escape the observation of the merest tyro, when they have not been much abbreviated. Such are—quáre—propteria—quamvis—interea—ubivis—quelquefois—environ—jusqu'a—peutetre—bientot—mientras—porque—tambien—tampoco—aquel—&c. When they are so corrupted or abbreviated in their orthography, that the materials of their formation are not obvious, they are mistaken for primitive words; and we class them differently from other words made of similar primitives, in which we are able to discover the materials of their formation.

Those which most frequently occur, are,
I, mine or my, me. We, our or ours, us.
Thou, thine or thy, thee. Ye or you, yours, your.
He, his, him.
She, her's, her. } They, their or theirs, them.
It, its.
Who, whose, whom.
Which, what.
This, that.
These, those.

The following words with many others, have been arranged in this class: each, every, either, all, some, such, other, other's, one, one's, ones, any, former, former's, latter, latter's, none, neither, whether. Some of these are compounds, such as n'either, wh'ether, &c. You will also frequently meet with compounds ending in *self selves, own* and *soever:* as, myself, ourselves, my own, whoever, whatsoever. Pronouns occur so frequently, that attentive readers may soon acquire a knowledge of them sufficient to avoid impropriety and solecism in their use.

G. Is there any test by which to ascertain the right pronoun, and its right use in a sentence?

P. The best that I am acquainted with, is, to take out the pronoun, and to supply its place with whatever you intend it to stand for or represent. If the meaning is not altered, and no difference is perceived in the ideas intended to be conveyed, the commutation proves the equivalence of the two expressions, and therefore, either may be used. Those which are termed Relative pronouns, relating to some word or phrase, require also *a situation in the sentence relative* to their antecedents. In the use of *who, whose, whom,* and *which,* in consequence of their being limited to no gender or number, we are exposed to the danger of ambiguity, if we are not careful in giving to them their *proper relative position.* In the following

sentence, the word *which* does not occupy its proper place. "That book on the table, which you brought to me, is an excellent one."

G. You meant to say that *book which*, and not the table which—for I brought *the book* to you.

P. "The soldiers of Leonidas who fell at Thermopylæ," is ambiguous; for the relative *who* may have either Leonidas or soldiers for its antecedent. These few examples, are, I hope, sufficient to make you careful in the use and location of pronouns. I conjecture that the words which are now called pronouns, and which are said to be used to avoid repetition, were not originally signs of other words, but of *things in certain situations*, or of those situations; and that they have subsequently acquired their pronominal character, from the convenience of their application in that way. Such extension of meaning is found in a great number of words, others in process of time, become more limited than they originally were. This extension or limitation of the meaning of words, is generally accompanied by some addition or alteration indicative of their extended or limited signification. I will give you an example of each kind: in one, the successive alterations, amount to an almost entire change. In the other, there is scarcely any alteration. The Latin word *dies*, a day, easily assumed the form of an adjective in *diurnus* (daily,) or what occupies the term of a day. The Italians from the latter word, have formed *giorno* a day, and *giornata* a day's *journey*. The French from *giorno*, formed journée, a day, or a day's journey—the Norman French, at the conquest of England by William the conqueror, brought with them their word *journée* subsequently changed into *journey*, which *we* now use (without any reference to *one day* or indeed to any *time*,) to distinguish travelling to a *distant place, or by land*, from neighbourhood travelling, or a voyage by water.

G. The meaning is very much altered and extended. I now know the real meaning of a *journey-man,* and *journey-work.*

P. The word *road* is the perfect participle of the verb to *ride,* and formerly meant *any place rode upon.* It is now *limited* to places intended and made for that purpose, and in the maritime language, to places in the water analogous to roads on the land.

Now may not our personal pronoun *ye* or *you,* which was also formerly written *ge,* be the perfect participle of the verb *to give*—which also means *to grant, to admit, to give tongue,* or *to speak to,* as in the vulgar expression "I gave him as good as sent." This verb *give,* it should be remarked, was formerly written *giffan* and *yiffan,* and the perfect participle *yeun, yeoven, yeven, geven, given.* If we take away the Tuetonick termination *en,* or *n,* which is retained in many modern words, and lopped off in as many or perhaps more, we shall have the pronoun *you* in all its forms—*ye ge* and *you,* corresponding with the radical letters of the original verb in both of its forms *giffan* and *yiffan;* and the reason of our using indifferently ye, or you, would be manifest.

G. Yes it would; for they mean the same, *ye* being formed from *yiffan, ge* from *giffan,* and *you* from *yeun,* or *yeoven* the participle. The meaning too of this participle, coincides with ye or you, for ye or you means *spoken to,* applied to persons, or a person, in that relative situation.

P. These coincidences will, I hope, rescue my conjecture from the imputation of gratuitous rashness. Our pronoun *which* is evidently a derivative corruption. We find it written *quhillis quhilk quilk* in old English, in the Norman French *qu'ille,* Modern French *qu'el que'il,* contracted into *qu'il.* I believe it to be the two Latin words *qui, who or which,* and *ille, he she* or *it,* formed into one word.

The word *where* was formerly written *quha*, and in Latin *qua;* we had also *quhat* for the modern *what*, in Latin *quod*, and *quhidder* for *whether*, or *which of the two*, another derivative from the Latin *quis* or *qui*, *who*.

G. What a mixture of languages we speak!

P. Not only we, but all the modern civilized nations have carried on a commerce, in which words have constituted a considerable article, though they have not yet been mentioned in the tariff, or subjected to custom-house duties. This class of words has been divided and sub-divided by the grammarians in various ways, scarcely any two concurring in the same arrangement. I refer you to Mr. Murray's classification, as perhaps the best that has yet been made. His primary division of pronouns into Personal, Relative, and Adjective, is easily comprehended, and serves all the purposes which others have attempted to accomplish by more minute and less accurate divisions.

DIALOGUE THE 23d.

P. Before we commence our examination of the Verb, I will make a few observations to you, on some remarkable errors into which philosophers have fallen, in attempting to ascertain and account for the phenomena of perception. You will then readily understand that their difficulties and errors in the examination, and in the explanation

of the phenomena of language, are consequences which might be expected to follow, and which have actually followed their errors in regard to perception. I have reserved these observations, until we should examine the Verb, because the nature and origin of this class of words have been so entirely obscured by the prevalence of the errors alluded to, that no satisfactory account of them has been given. The verb has been the stumbling block of the grammarians; and while all the other words in language have been traced to their origin in the noun, the verb has remained not in its original obscurity, (for I think it was not originally obscure,) but enveloped in the clouds which false philosophy has thrown around it. By tracing conjunctions, prepositions, articles, &c. to the orignal word, Mr. John Horne Tooke, has clearly proved that they are *nouns or verbs*, and he has demonstrated that all discourse may be resolved into these two kinds of words. That he did not ascertain also, the nature of the verb, may be attributed to the remaining influence of the metaphysical errors, which have *since* been dissipated by the very able writers on the Philosophy of the Mind.*

In attempting to explain the phenomena of perception, the *ancient philosophers assumed the existence* of something, neither matter nor mind, neither the object perceived, nor the sentient mind, but intermediate, passing from one to the other, like a carrier-pigeon. This imaginary creature of the mind, which existed not in nature, received various names, such as *Phantasm, Image, Idea*, &c.

By means of this convenient messenger, what we now know to be ultimate facts and not susceptible of explanation, were pretended to be explained. Thus to explain the phenomena of vision, they said that the image of the ob-

* I allude particularly to Professors Stewart, and Brown, and to M. Prevost of Geneva.

ject presented to the eye, entered the eye and enabled us to see.

G. This is the theory of perception that Dr. Reid has refuted in his essays, is it not?

P. The same; although Dr. Brown thinks it was abandoned by many philosophers before Dr. Reid's refutation, and by some to whom Dr. Reid attributes a belief in the truth of that theory.* Be that as it may, it is certain that the theory had generally been adopted, and influenced the speculations of men on all intellectual subjects, and on none more than on language. *Many terms* which owe their origin and use to this theory, although it is exploded, still remain, and continue to perpetuate error, prejudice, fallacious reasoning and opinions. The grammarians have adopted this theory, and have applied it to the explanation of the phenomena of Language. In order to account for the production of the sentific suggestion in the mind, they have thought it necessary to introduce *intermediate words* between *the mind* and the *Noun the sign of the object of thought*, by means of which intermediate words sense is produced in discourse, or the relation of things are expressed. These intermediate words as might be expected, were all those the meaning of which they did not exactly comprehend. They were therefore called by names which were thought to denote their several intermediate functions, such as conjunctions, prepositions, adverbs, &c.,† performing duties in language corresponding with those of *phantasms*, *ideas* and *images* in the production of perception. They thought they were explaining the phenomena of language, just as those of perception had been explained. But the same difficulty occurs in both systems. The supposition of any thing interme-

* Brown's Philosophy, lecture 27th.

† "A philosophis ac maxime *Stoicis*, auctus est numerus," the very men who introduced the *Ideal* system.—*Quinctilian.*

diate, explains nothing. In perception there is the object perceived and the mind of the perceiver: in language, there is the *sign* of the object and the mind of the perceiver. When objects of perception are present to the senses, they produce a certain state of the mind corresponding with their actual relations at *that time.* The mind, if I may so express it, receives intelligence of the objects and their relations, from the perception of the objects themselves existing in those states of relation. In language the same result is produced by nouns, the signs of objects. The sentific suggestion arises in the mind, from the use of them alone. Why it should, is not more incomprehensible than that *we see* when our eyes are open. I am conscious of the truth of both these facts, which I believe to be ultimate facts, and of which no account can be given, but that "*such is the constitution of our nature.*"

G. I now clearly see the conclusion to which you would lead me, that all words in language are *nouns or names,* and that the sentific suggestion arises in the mind from the use of the *signs* of things, in the same manner that thoughts arise from the presence of the objects themselves to the senses.

P. That is precisely what I wish you to understand. For instance, if you *see* a tree growing up out of the earth, *a certain state of mind* is produced *by the sight of these objects.* There is nothing but the objects and the mind, that we know any thing of, concerned. To produce the same state of mind by speech or writing which was produced by sight, we present to the mind the *signs only of the objects seen.*

G. I see no reason why *the signs* should not answer without any thing intermediate, or how the intervention of words not the signs of the objects, can assist us in explaining the phenomena.

P. The various relations of things to each other, which constitute our states of mind called thought, and which we express by language, are not separate and distinct *objects of thought*, or expressed by separate and distinct *verbal signs*, but arise in both instances from the mere presence of the objects to the senses, or from the mere connexion of *their signs* in discourse.

G. If this be true, the *Verb* as well as all other words, is the name of a thing.

P. Yes, either physical or metaphysical. A verb is said to be a word that signifies "to be, to do, or to suffer: as, I rest, I rule, I am ruled." Now, by the mere connexion of the nouns *I* and *rest*, the relation between two things arises in the mind, between the person signified by the *word I*, and that state which we call *rest*. If the word rest be not the name of something, what is it in relation to the word *I*, that is intended to be expressed? Does not the same state of mind arise from the use of these two words, that would result from the perception of a person, in that state which we signify by the name *rest?* If you had never heard the word used as a verb but only as a noun, and were to *see* a person *in that state*, and he should say to you "*I rest*, would you not perfectly understand him?

G. I think I should. For children often use no verbs and are understood. The relation arises in the mind from the mere putting together of nouns.

P. When the possible relations of things to other things are known, they will arise in the mind from the signs of the things. We have no verb in our language formed from the noun *axe*, yet if I say to you, "axe down that tree," is not my meaning known? Do you not comprehend the relations which I wish should exist between the *axe* and the tree?

G. Yes, I do; you mean that I should cut it down with an axe.

P. And had I said "*cut* it down with an axe," relations would have arisen in your mind, connecting *a cut the tree,* and the *axe as the with,* all together.

G. Yet it seems to me, that when you say "*axe* that tree down," the word *axe* is not only the sign of the instrument, but of the action to be performed with it.

P. Then it would be a complex sign of *a cut* and *an axe?*

G. No: but of *cutting* and an *axe.*

P. What is *cutting,* but the name of an operation? or if you please, of the two nouns *cut* and *application,* connected by the mind?

G. What will you make of the termination *ed* or *d* found at the end of so many verbs in their imperfect tense?

P. It is nothing but the word *did* expressing *past time,* incorporated with the *noun.* The many additions to nouns, expressing what is called the tense or the mood, the number or the person, have tended very much to conceal the radical noun from our view; and these additions, the mutilated legs and wings of other nouns, are mistaken for elementary parts of a simple word, when in fact they are component parts of a complex term.

Turn to any dictionary of your own, or any foreign language, and observe what a vast number of the names of things are verbalized. Indeed, when any instrument is invented, and there is in the language no general term capable of expressing the kind of use to which it is applied, *the name of the instrument itself* is used for that purpose, and the usual appendages of other verbs, are added to it. From the verb thus formed, descend the numerous progeny of participles, verbal nouns, gerunds, supines, &c. which are subsequently combined with other words, and parts of words. Then succeed slight changes in orthogra-

phy, and abbreviations for the sake of sound and convenient despatch in writing; and at last, although the term complex by the additions, corrupted by changes in its orthography, and mutilated for brevity's sake, produces in all who hear it, a state of mind *the same that would be produced by the uncombined, unaltered, original signs, which form the complex term,* yet they are unable to detect in it, the simple materials of its formation, or to analyse the simple elements of thought, of which these simple materials blended together in the complex term, are the signs. Thus formed, and thus understood, it passes by commerce, adoption, or descent, from one people to another. Ignorant of its roots, and unable to dig them out, they consider it a *primitive word,* and it is consequently classed with their primitive words, from which it differs as much as a complicated machine in its last state of improvement, does from any one piece of wood or metal, a part of it.

G. The analogy between language and a machine, is very striking: if we take the machine to pieces to ascertain the materials of which it is formed, we find nothing qut wood or metal; yet if we consider the pieces apart, it is no machine, and the same relations do not arise in the mind. Put the pieces together, and although there is nothing still but wood or metal, the mere connexion of the pieces or their juxtaposition *excites in the mind all the various relations,* which if we had not analysed the machine, we might imagine to be *material parts of the machine* itself. So in language: the mere connexion of nouns gives rise to all the relations, or *states of the mind,* which we have *mistaken for words, the materials of language;* for when we analyse language, we find in *words the materials, nothing but the signs of things,* and that the relations which we thought were signified by words, are mental operations resulting from the connexion of words, the

signs of things only, in the same manner that the wood or metal connected in the machine, excites in the mind various relations which are no material part of the machine.

P. As you seem to be now in possession of the ideas in regard to the nature of language,* which I wish you to have, I will, for the sake of illustration, produce only a few instances of nouns, now used as verbs. From the nouns *saw, file, plane, hand, mouth,* &c. we have to *saw,* to *file,* to *plane,* to *hand* and to *handle,* to *mouth,* &c.

G. The common people say to *tree a hare,* even if the animal takes shelter under rocks or in the earth.

P. This shows you how the original limited meaning of words is lost or extended when they are verbalized. The specific relation which at first arose in the mind, as existing between the hare and a tree, yielded to the more general relation between the hare and *a place of shelter* or *security* from the dogs. From the noun *hand,* we have to *hand* and to *handle,* and then, from the verb to *handle* we have the noun *a handle,* or rather without contraction, *a handled.* From *hold* we have *hilt;* indeed many of our nouns are the past participles of verbs, which verbs were formed from nouns, with or without change of form. Nouns verbalized, and these verbs again transformed into nouns, constitute perhaps the most numerous expressions in language. The words *drove, stroke, road, breath, gift, bit, abode, born* (or *bairn,* a child) *slit, girt,* and hundreds of others, are of this kind. Among the derivatives from the word *sign,* which were enumerated in a former conversation, you may have observed how many of them were formations from verbs, derived from that word.

* Quinctilian's remark rightly understood, is true—" quod loquimur" is discourse—" de quo loquimur" the objects of discourse, the relations of which to each other arise in the mind from " quod loquimur," which is nothing more than *putting together* the *signs* of the things " de quo loquimur."

G. Yes, I did observe it: And there seems to be a continual action and re-action between words, and the states of mind which they produce.

P. True; one extension or one limitation, leads to another. Newly observed and newly discovered connexions of things, require new modes of expression, to suggest the consequent states of mind produced. Words in use are then either extended or limited for the purpose, or some additional noun is introduced either in its perfect form, or some part of it is incorporated with another. All these operations on *signs*, can only be known by tracing words in all their mutations, through all the periods of time at which these changes were made, or by ascertaining from careful reading when any extension or limitation has given a new signification to a word, without any change in its form. By comparing the uses made of words by reputable authors in different ages, you will soon ascertain the various significations of the same word, and many of the changes of form which words have undergone.

The Saxon word *mood** which means *anger*, has been so generalized, that we now speak of a merry mood, or a pleasant mood, though the adjective still retains its ancient signification—*moody*. The first extension that I have observed in it, was that from being the sign of an individual feeling, it became the *sign of a class* of similar or related feelings of strong excitement. It next signified, *any temper or state of the mind;* now, it not only has this general signification, but means something by analogy, in *logic*, in *music*, and the particular form of *a verb*, shewing "*the manner* in which the being, action or passion, is represented."

* Perhaps the Gothic word *mod*, the *mind*, is nearer to the root; hence we have in illustration of the principle, many more extensions of its meaning and limitations of it, in the words *move, motive, modest, moderation*, &c.

Yet when we have gotten at the root or something near it, we have little difficulty in tracing the circumstances of resemblance through the various meanings, down to the modern *mood* and its numerous family of *mode, modify, modification*, &c.

I selected this word mood, that you may know its import when applied to verbs, as well as to illustrate the principle on which words have seemed to change their meaning, by extension to analogous ideas, or to those thought to be in some respect similar.

G. Words seem first to lose their character of indicating individuals, and to retain the traits of the species to which the individual belongs: then the specific distinctions are disregarded, and generic resemblance only regarded. The tendency to generalization is found even in our use of words.

P. It is so much in the constitution of our minds, that it is not wonderful that it finds its way to the mouth, and affects our language in as great a degree as it does our thoughts.

In our next conversation I shall continue the examination of verbs.

DIALOGUE THE 24th.

P. Let us resume our consideration of verbs. You mentioned yesterday an instance of the *extension of the meaning* of the word *tree,* in its verbal form. I will give you another in the Latin language. The word *equus* means a horse. From this noun is formed the verb *equitáre,* which originally meant *to ride on a horse.* But the specific meaning was soon disregarded, and *equitare* then meant *to ride* on any thing, even on a stick or reed,* or as your brother John is now doing, on a corn-stalk.

G. This practice then, is not confined to our language, or rather to us.

P. It is not. It proceeds from two principles in human nature, and therefore is found to have affected the languages of all nations—the disposition to generalize—and to accomplish our purposes with the least possible labour, adopting any thing at hand which can be made to effect it, although originally intended and made for some end altogether different. You must keep the operation of these two principles in view, if you would understand your own or any other language. To the first, we owe all general terms and *extended* significations: to the last, elliptical expressions, compound words whether of wholes or parts, and abbreviated words. So soon as nouns became verbalized, the ideas of mood and tense attached to them, indicating the manner and time of their producing on the mind the various relations arising from observing them or reflecting on them. To express these ideas, it was necessary to add

* "Equitare arundine longa."—*Horace Sat. L. 2d. s. 3d.*

or change something. Hence the variety of terminations and *auxiliary verbs* as certain words are termed, and the compounding of verbs: as, *I write, I wrote, I have written, I had written, I shall write, writing, having written*, &c.

G. Such words then, as *writing, wrote*, &c. are *complex terms.*

P. Certainly they are. The sub-division of verbs into Active, Passive, and Neuter, you will now readily comprehend. When *two nouns only* are connected, and one of them is verbalized, producing the sentific suggestion accompanied only by the accessory ideas of manner and time, the verb is neuter, as, *I rest*, or *I rested, I sleep, I slept.* The relation arises in the mind, of the connexion between the two nouns *I* and *rest*, or *I* and *sleep*, accompanied by the suggestions of manner and time.

When *three nouns* produce the sentific suggestion, and *one of them is verbalized*, the verb is active. One of the nouns is often *implied* and not expressed: as I eat *bread*, I *eat* (you observe *some eatable* is implied,) *I love John, I love, something* loved being implied. Now *the omission* of the implied noun in the objective or accusative case, which is concerned in the production of the sentific suggestion, in all cases in which the verb is said to be active, has given a character of abstraction to the verbs; thus still more keeping out of our view the *noun* which constitutes the *material* out of which the verb is formed, causing us to mistake its nature, and presenting difficulties in the way of our attempts to ascertain what the verbs are. So soon as for the sake of brevity of expression, and generalization of a particular noun verbalized, one of the three nouns connected by the sentific suggestion was dropped, as in *I eat*, instead of *I eat bread*, or *something*, or *any thing*, the word *eat* became the sign of a sort of *abstract eating*, the particular *substance eaten* being disregarded

by the omission of a word to designate it. This operation lead to the consideration of verbs as a kind of *universals*, or abstract existences, like Mr. Locke's* triangle which was neither obtuse, rectangular, nor acute, and yet all of these.

G. Or like Crambe's abstract of a Lord Mayor.

P. Yes. We know now, that these generalizations like all others, are the creations of the mind. There is no such thing as *abstract eating*.

G. If eating, without the consumption of any substance, would answer to the only idea which I have of eating, that is, to afford *aliment* to the body, the power to carry on the process abstractedly would be very convenient to seamen, when a short allowance of mouldy biscuit was exhausted.

P. It would: though I think that the poor seamen would maintain the truth, by declaring this *abstract eating* although a grammatical luxury, to be very windy diet, infinitely worse than *mouldy biscuit* or *soup maigre*.

When five nouns, *three of them being verbalized*, produce the sentific suggestion, the verb is passive, and there is or may be the omission of two of them, one of these two being considered a noun or pronoun, and the other which is verbalized, a preposition; as, *I am loved by George*, or *I am loved by you*, or (with the omission of two,) *I am loved*.

G. Here is the abstraction and generalization again.

P. True. The words *I* and *loved* are in apposition; the word *loved* being generalized by abstraction, designates the *class* to which the word *I* belongs, that is to say, *I* is among the *class* of objects to which the term loved is applied. The participle *loved* like all perfect participles,

* See note N, at the end of the book.

is a complex term containing two nouns and implying a third, such as drove, bit, &c.

G. I understand you. The term *bit* is the name of a *class of things subjected* to a *bite*, the biter being necessarily implied.

P. You cannot know what is *bitten* or *bit*, or what *driven* or *drove*, till an individual of the class is expressed. When an individual object is introduced, the abstraction is destroyed although the classification remains, as when I say *the bit* is *steel* or *silver—cattle* are *driven*, or *the drove*. These words, like other general terms, are frequently limited by articles to the designation of an individual of the class, as *a bit* or *the road*.

G. In all such cases as, *I am loved* or *I am hurt*, there is the necessary implication of a *loving thing*, or a *hurting* thing. For whenever we are hurt, it must be by something, and that which hurts us may be expressed: as, *I am hurt by the horse*, or omitted but nevertheless implied, as *I am hurt*. This is evident, unless indeed there are such things as *abstract hurts*, which I should greatly prefer to *abstract eating*.

P. If there could exist any difference between nonentities, your preference would be well founded. You may change the *passive* form of expression into the *active*, by making the fifth noun, expressed or implied, the nominative, and the nominative to the verb in the passive form of expression, the objective case: as, *I am hurt by the horse* may be converted into *the horse hurts me*.

G. How is this? Where is the element of thought denoted by *your fourth noun*, or as it is called the *preposition by?*

P. The word *by*,* although it is called a preposition, is a general term, or name of a class; and when the general

* By Bi—Biz—Byð—an Anglo-Saxon word, means *be it*, or *let it be*.

term and an individual included in it are both mentioned, unless the object of the expression is to show the class to which it belongs, the general term may be omitted, and none of the sense is lost if we know the class to which the individual belongs. Therefore if I say, *I am hurt, be it* a horse that hurt me, or *I am hurt,* the *being,* a horse hurt me, knowing a horse to be *a being,* or thing that exists, you lose nothing of the *intended object of the expression* by the other form, *a horse hurts me.*

G. I was surprised to see such verbs as *I run, I walk,* classed with neuter verbs. They are called active intransitive verbs, to distinguish them from such active verbs as are said to govern another word in the objective case. The latter are called active transitive verbs. But I shall now be able at once, to distinguish the three forms of active, passive, and neuter verbs, by the number of nouns connected in the production of the *sentific suggestion.* When there are only two, the verb is neuter, when there are three, it is active, and when there are five, it is passive, although one is frequently omitted when the verb is active, and two when it is passive, to give by abstraction the ideas of *universal action, and universal subjection to action.*

P. The terms which you use, are sufficiently general to satisfy Aristotle himself, and all the Realists who have ever believed in the existence of abstract images, forms, and phantoms, from his day to the present.

To-morrow we will resume our conversation.

DIALOGUE THE 25th.

P. The conclusion to which our analytical investigations have led us, is that the *noun*, physical and metaphysical, is the material of which all the words of all languages have been formed. The different parts of speech into which the English language is divided, we must therefore consider as sub-divisions of one class. These sub-divisions, and the arrangement of the words under them, have been made by the grammarians generally to depend on a single point of resemblance—analogy in signification. If the conclusion at which we have arrived, be true, the simple radical signs in every language, are, if I may be allowed to say so, one and the same raw material, *articulate sounds denoting things;* and all other words, far the most numerous in all languages, are formations from this raw material subsequent in their fabrication, various in their forms, and complex in their signification. The extent, limits, and modifications of signification undergo, as time rolls on, continual limitation, extension and change, proportioned to the progress of the mind in the acquisition of new ideas, or in the modification of old ones, from observation on things or reflection on thoughts. *Present use* therefore, is the only standard and criterion of present signification: and *reputable custom* is the only *admissible evidence* of *present use.* The same words then, in books of different ages, may have different meanings, and all attempts to fix their signification permanently, must be vain, while new ideas arise in the mind, and so long as old words or forma-

tions from them shall be used to suggest these new ideas. New states of mind will continue to arise, and although many new terms may be invented, more old ones will be used, because we abstract, because we generalize, because we compare, and because we will from mere laziness, put our "*new wine into old bottles.*" The more ancient the books are which we consult, the greater will be the probability of our finding *radical words;* because in every succeeding age, new formations have been added to the language, and therefore, the labour of research and the chances of mistake, are multiplied in later productions.

But to ascertain the *present meaning of words*, we must consult the reputable authors of the *present day*. Considerable latitude and variety are allowable in the connexion of nouns in a sentence, the ascertained or supposed connexions of things producing in the mind, the state of thought arising from these ascertained or supposed connexions, by almost any *order* of the words. If I say—my hand the fire burns, or the fire burns my hand, or—the fire my hand burns—our previous knowledge prevents the possibility of mistake or misconception, and forces us to understand the relation existing between the hand and the fire, from either of these orders of expression. The knowledge of things, as well as the use of significant prefixes and terminations denoting gender, number, case, &c., direct the mind in the production, and in the communication of its various states or thoughts. In addition to the information which I have in former conversations given you, in regard to *conjunctions, prepositions* and *adverbs*, I need now say but little, as you have become acquainted with my opinion of the origin of all words in all languages. I might have confined my remarks to the *Verb*, and have referred you to the work of an acute, industrious and learned Etymologist, Mr. John Horne Tooke, who in his "Diversions of Purley," has traced the conjunctions to verbs,

the prepositions to verbs and nouns. The adverbs are known to be compounds or corruptions of the other parts of speech: all these have been subjected to much abbreviation, corruption, combination and change in their orthography. Yet all this does not change the nature of the material of which they have been formed. Those parts of speech that have been traced to the verbs, (if pursued a little farther,) and the verbs themselves would have been found to be *nouns;* and I did not wish in our analyses to stop short of what I conceive to be the whole truth, nor did I wish that you, by taking at the outset a partial or incorrect view of the subject, should be either retarded or misled in your future investigations. Before I close this subject, and leave you to the grammarians and philologists, I will make only a few remarks. But I shall be pleased to afford you assistance whenever you may need it.

The anatomist only can explain to you the forms and uses of those parts of our organic system, which are concerned in the formation and utterance of articulate sounds. An acquaintance with these parts of our system, and a knowledge of their functions lead directly to the solution of many problems, and the reconciliation of many apparent inconsistencies in language.

The substitution of sounds of greater facility to our organs of speech, for the more difficult and analogous sounds, and the consequent changes in the orthography of words, are in a great measure justly attributable to our physical formation. The organs of articulation, like other parts of our system, are affected by use or disuse, and acquire habits of ease or difficulty from use or disuse in the utterance of words. A Frenchman finds great difficulty in giving to the letters *th* their English sound, and an American or Englishman in sounding the letter *u*, and the liquid *l* of the French. Now, when an interchange of words presenting such difficulties of pronunciation takes place, such

changes are immediately made as the habits of the organs of speech require. The change in the pronunciation produces change in the orthography, and in a few years the native country of a word again receives it, perhaps so changed by travel, that it cannot recognize its own citizen, and consequently treats him like a foreigner. I have heard an illiterate native of France attempting to pronounce *mutton* and *pullet* like the English and Americans, without any idea of their being the French words *mouton* and *poulét* in dresses of England.

You may have attended to the fact, that when we call to a person at a distance from us, we prolong the final sound of his name if the sound admits of easy prolongation: and if it does not, we are apt to add an open vowel sound, capable of prolonged utterance.

G. I have often taken notice of it: in calling aloud we say John-é, Charl-é, in the latter case dropping the consonant *s*, for the same reason that in the first case we add the *e*, that the word may end in an open vowel sound.

P. In the Latin and some other languages, there is what is termed a *vocative case* of nouns, and it has a form different from the nominative, only when the termination of the nominative does not *easily* admit of prolonged utterance. Thus, *Domine* is the vocative of Dominus, *Pari* of Paris, *Ænea* of Æneas.

Here then, we discover *the origin* of the vocative case to be the consequence of our physical formation, and of the habits of our organs of speech.

The Americans and English have it in their oral language, as much as the Romans and the Greeks, and why they do not admit it to be a part of their *written language*, which as I think, should be a faithful representation to the eye, of what the voice sends to the ear, you must enquire of the grammarians. If Doctor Campbell's definition of

grammar and his ideas of its only claim to authority be correct,* a vocative case should be admitted.

Our learned and labourious countryman, Mr. Lindley Murray, the author and the compiler of so many able elementary works, both in English and French, to whom you and all the young people of Great Britain and America, are so much indebted, (as he himself informs us,) "long doubted the propriety of assigning to English substantives, *an objective case:* but a renewed critical examination of the subject, has produced in his mind a full persuasion, that the nouns of our language are entitled to this comprehensive objective case."† This decision is supported both by reason and analogy, although there is *no difference of form* between the nominative and the objective cases. The difference in their relation to other words is manifest, and this difference arising in the mind, should be indicated, it matters not how: To term the one *the nominative,* and the other *the objective,* answers the purpose. Do not these remarks apply *a fortiori,* that is, with stronger reason to the justice and propriety of assigning to English substantives, a vocative case? Such assignation, would be supported by *the fact* of its existence and customary use, both in a different form and in a different relation from the nominative case, and also by analogy. The different states of the mind produced by *John runs,* and *Johné run hither,* are obvious to all who employ their thoughts on their own mental operations.

As the desire for brevity in the communication of thought, has amalgamated and clipped our verbal coinage, so the desire of its easy currency has smoothed off its vocal asperities. Written language constantly approximates to speech: therefore, letters the signs of the articulate sounds, and syllables constituting words or parts of words,

* Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric, l. 2d, c. 1st.

† Murray's Grammar. Collins's Stereotype edition of 1823, part the 2d, chap. 3d.

as that it may easily present to us the general truths observed to regulate the use of words, and all the exceptions and anomolies, the orders of succession which are observed in putting them together with the sounds which reputable custom requires and the various poetical arrangements to please the ear. That the classification of words, the definitions, declensions, conjugations, and comparison are nothing more than the arrangement of individuals, to which the same general truths apply, and to which the same general reasonings are to a certain extent applicable—that by the use of classification, an instrument which we derive from our intellectual powers of abstraction and generalization, we may, from the knowledge of a few individuals, infer the existence in all of the class, of what *we know to exist* in the few; but that this knowledge is necessarily limited, and therefore does not supercede the necessity of examining individually the objects in any class, when we wish to acquire complete knowledge of any individual. That when we discover any thing new in any object, we are induced to suspect that it is common to others of the same class, generalization therefore, leads to investigation and discovery—that the use of this instrument, aids the memory and the power of recollection, and condenses our knowledge—that the power of forming the articulate sounds represented by the letters of the alphabet, is best acquired by careful and frequent exercise—that the organs adapted to pronunciation, are subject to the influence of habit, and lose or acquire power by *disuse* and by *use*—that changes in the sound and consequently in the orthography of words, are frequently to be attributed to habits of pronunciation, previously acquired by those who adopt the words—that the manner of sounding words with the proper time, intervals, intonation, emphasis, accent, and fitness of succession to please the ear, is common to language and the science of

music—that by tracing words through all their derivative forms and combinations back to their roots, we acquire not only the most extensively useful knowledge of them in all their acceptations, and the power to form new combinations with them in our own tongue, but are at the same time actually acquiring all the languages ancient and modern, in so great a degree as they contain the same radical words, having only to observe their methods of subsequent formation—that in all languages, the disposition to generalize, has produced numerous analogies, the love of brevity many abbreviations of words and complex terms, and that laziness has caused the application of old words in their old forms, or in new formations from them, to the suggestion of new ideas—that the best method of ascertaining all the acceptations in which a word has been received, is to compare all the phrases and sentences in old and new books in which it occurs—and that such comparison generally enables us to discover some point of resemblance in all the various and often apparently different meanings of the word. This point of common resemblance leads us to the root, whence we trace all the meanings, literal and figurative, limited, extended, and analogous which the word conveyed at different periods—that the *reputable customary use* at any period, fixed the meaning at that time, and consequently the same use fixes the meaning now, and will hereafter, as well as the orthography, etymology, syntax and prosody, of the whole system of signs called language—that the business of the grammarian is to inform us, what is the reputable customary use in these particulars, but that language itself is its own best historian, for those who would thoroughly understand it—that to understand the language of any people at any period, we must read the books of that period in the language of that people?

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P. Yes: This summary, although short, contains much that I wished to impress on your mind, and although not complete, will if remembered, serve to bring back to you all that you have omitted that is worth recollecting.

I cannot conclude, without attempting to guard you against the great delusion which I have mentioned, perhaps more than once in our conversations, which has for many ages lead men away from profitable and attainable objects of pursuit, when their minds have been turned to physical or metaphysical enquiries—the direction of the mind to the discovery of *a cause*, that mental creation of something out of nothing, to account for ultimate facts which can never be understood by men. There is but *one cause*—the all-wise and all-powerful God of the Universe. Of him we know nothing but what he has been pleased to reveal to us—all around us are the *effects* of his wisdom and his power.

The exercise of our faculties, rightly directed, must be limited to the phenomena of matter and mind—to the discovery of material and mental elements—to the natural and practicable combinations of these—and to uniform invariable successions. If, instead of resting satisfied with the investigation of these attainable objects, and with the direction of our discoveries to the useful purposes of life in which all science and all art consist, we mis-direct our powers and waste our intellectual strength in the vain and fruitless pursuit of what never has been discovered, and what never will be discovered, we are guilty of great presumption and great folly. 'Tis not Philosophy, but foolishness that prompts us to scrutinize the unrevealed will of our Creator.

'Tis wisdom, therefore, to be contented with the exercise of our faculties within the limits which the infinite wisdom of God has fixed, as the eternal boundaries of human knowledge.

The discovery that there are such boundaries, and that the whole subject of *Causation* is beyond them, with the consequent confinement of our researches to the field in which all that we can find, is placed, are not the least advantages which have been derived from inductive analysis. The field within these boundaries is very extensive. Much of it is yet unexplored, and still more is imperfectly explored. Human knowledge, which would go beyond its boundaries, has not yet reached them in any department of art or science.

Much, therefore, remains to be done, which may be done even by you.—Go on, then, with firmness, resolution, and patient persevering industry.—Aided and supported by these, *you* may perhaps make "true conquests, and *those which leave no regret*—those which we gain over ignorance. The most honourable and the most useful of all employments, is to extend the bounds of human knowledge."

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

Note A.

This generalization by my pupil in perceiving from *one instance that a letter is the sign of a sound*, that all the letters are so, may, perhaps, be thought not *natural* by those who have not turned their attention and observation to the language of children, so indicative of their mental operations. I will mention a few instances of generalization by very young children, which were noted on account of *their oddity*, long before I determined to write a book.

I frequently ride for exercise, and on my return take up before me one of the children, and ride with him around the yard on a little black mare. George accompanied his mother on a visit to his uncle's. His uncle Mr. H—, who also rode a black horse, took George before him in one of his rides, when the following dialogue occurred:

G. Uncle H—, is this my father's black mare Sally Tally?

Mr. H. No, George; it is my black horse ———

G. Uncle, *if your black horse* ——— *was my father's black mare Sally Tally, would you be my father?*

A lady said to a little girl not two years old, whom I was caressing, "Jean, you are *Miss* Caty's *baby.*" Jean's reply was, "*No*, I am *Miss Papa's baby.*"

I remarked to a little boy not three years old, that the hickory *nut* which he held in his hand was like an egg. "Yes, papa it is a hickory nut tree's egg," was his reply; and a little girl standing by added, "John, if you put it into the ground, the sun will sit on it and *hatch* it into a tree."

Parents who attend personally to their children, will frequently hear evidences of observed resemblance and of odd classification. Our minds are so constituted, that we cannot observe points of resemblance without classing the objects. Hence all general terms in language. These often lead to discovery, and often into error, in attributing to individual objects the elements or relations of other objects included in the same class, which elements or relation are not common points of resemblance. We have a remarkable instance of error in Doctor Samuel Johnson's definition of the word *welkin*, which he afterwards qualified by a "*suppose*," when applied to the *eye*. Led astray by one point of resemblance because the general colour of the sky is *blue*, he thought that this epithet, when applied to the eye, denoted *its colour*. Unfortunately for his supposition, but fortunately for true knowledge, another (and the point of resemblance which the epithet conveys,) enables us easily to reconcile the inconsistencies which result from the adoption of his definition. It has no reference to colour, but to motion, and means *rolling* or *wandering*.

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A lady said to a little girl not two years old, whom I was caressing, "Jean, you are *Miss* Caty's *baby.*" Jean's reply was, "*No,* I am *Miss Papa's baby.*"

I remarked to a little boy not three years old, that the hickory *nut* which he held in his hand was like an egg. "Yes, papa, it is a hickory nut tree's egg," was his reply; and a little girl standing by added, "John, if you put it into the ground, the sun will sit on it and *hatch* it into a tree."

Parents who attend personally to their children, will frequently hear evidences of observed resemblance and of odd classification. Our minds are so constituted, that we cannot observe points of resemblance without classing the objects. Hence all general terms in language. These often lead to discovery, and often into error, in attributing to individual objects the elements or relations of other objects included in the same class, which elements or relation are not common points of resemblance. We have a remarkable instance of error in Doctor Samuel Johnson's definition of the word *welkin,* which he afterwards qualified by a "*suppose,*" when applied to the *eye.* Led astray by one point of resemblance because the general colour of the sky is *blue,* he thought that this epithet, when applied to the eye, denoted *its colour.* Unfortunately for his supposition, but fortunately for true knowledge, another (and the point of resemblance which the epithet conveys,) enables us easily to reconcile the inconsistencies which result from the adoption of his definition. It has no reference to colour, but to motion, and means *rolling* or *wandering.*

Note B.

The quotation from the Abbe Condillac which follows, satisfactorially explains the natural and simple process of generalization, and the consequent extension of the signs of individual objects, to the denotation of other resembling objects; "Un enfant appelle du nom *d'arbre*, *le premier arbre* que nous lui montrons. Un second arbre qu'il voit ensuite lui rapelle *la meme idée*, il lui donne le *meme nom*; de meme a un troisième, a un quatriéme, et voila *le mot d'arbre* donne *d'abord a un individu* qui devient pour lui *un nom* de classe, ou de genre *une idée abstrait*, qui comprend tous les arbres en general." Yet with all due deference to the Abbé and all the metaphysicians, I am disposed to think, from my own reflection on the process of generalization, as it takes place in my own mind, and from observation of the conversations of children, compared with the questions which I have put to them, that there is no *abstraction* in the process. There is a *disregard* of differences; because, they are not observed in classification. The mind is struck, not by differences which it abstracts, but by resemblances observed, which create the state of mind that converts the names of individuals into general terms, to express all of the same kind that produce that same state of mind. The term *abstraction*, therefore, does not seem to me properly applicable to any part of the process which I conceive to be synthetical, but properly applies to operations of a very different nature, entirely analytical in their character. This is not entirely a question of verbal criticism, as is evident from the quotation from Doctor Andrews' commencing on page 34. From this it is evident, that an actual abstraction or removal of peculiarities or differences in the objects classed, is thought to be a part and no inconsiderable part, in the process of the mind in the formation of general ideas.

Note C.

"The necessity of studying particular Constitutions of Government by the help *of systematical descriptions* of them, arises from the same circumstances, which render it expedient, in most instances, to study *particular languages*, by consulting the *writings of grammarians*. In both cases, the knowledge we wish to acquire, comprehends an infinite number of particulars; the consideration of which, *in detail*, would distract the attention and overload the memory. The systematical descriptions of politicians, *like the general rules* of grammarians are in a higher degree useful, for arranging and simplifying the objects of study: But, in *both cases*, we must remember, that the knowledge we acquire *in this manner*, is to be received *with great limitations, and that* it is no more possible to convey, in a systematical form, a just and complete idea of a particular government, than it is *to teach a language completely by means of general rules*, without *practical assistance from reading* and conversation." Stewart's Philosophy, vol. 1st, chap. 4th, sec. 8th; and he might

have added, without a knowledge of the grounds of arrangement and an explanation of the general truths or rules deduced. As the political system of one nation is affected by its relation to the systems of other nations, so the particular tongue of one people is affected by the general principles of language founded in human nature, and co-extensive with the human race. Any one language is one example of the operation of these general principles, and therefore, cannot be satisfactorily explained but by tracing it to them. The philosophy of language must consequently be applied to the explanation of the phenomena of every tongue. For these reasons I have not confined myself to particular grammatical systems, or to the mere application of "*the rules*" contained in them.

Note D.

Many writers on language have been much perplexed with the fact, that *the same inanimate object* is in different countries considered to be of different genders. In one country, it is spoken of as being a male, in another as being a female. The names of the same object, are, therefore, classed with masculine nouns in one language, and with feminine nouns in another. Among the writers on this subject, one of great research, acknowledged talents, and of critical acuteness and discrimination, Mr. John Horne Tooke, after exposing the errors and the ignorance of others on this subject, states the historical fact, that "figure apart, in our language the names of things without sex, are also, without gender." But then he says "and this, not because our reasoning or understanding differs from theirs who gave them gender, (*which must be the case if the mind or reason*, was concerned in it) but because, with us the relation of words to each other, is denoted by the place or by prepositions, which denotation in their language, usually made a part of the words themselves, and was shewn by cases or terminations." See his Diversions of Purley vol. 1st, chap. the 4th, of the noun. As I am not convinced by the reasoning of Mr. Tooke, on this subject, I cannot submit to his authority, although I acknowledge it to be of great weight on subjects connected with the philosophy of language. So entirely am I satisfied of his candour, and that his object in his Etymological researches, was the discovery of truth, that I believe, were he now alive, he would be more gratified by the detection even of his own errors, than by a tame and unthinking submission to his authority.

In languages denoting what are called the relations of things (or rather of words their signs) *not by terminations or cases, but by prepositions* chiefly, the *names of many inanimate objects are of the masculine or feminine gender*, as all are in the French and many in the Spanish, and this without their being thought to be figuratively used. But even in the case of languages, in which the denotation of relations is thought to be expressed *by terminations* or cases, I cannot agree with Mr. Tooke, that because the name of the same object is in different languages of different genders, the fact is any proof that mind or rea-

son was not concerned in it; or, that if mind or reason was concerned in it, this difference in the gender of the names of the same object in different languages would justify the conclusion that the reasoning or understanding of those nations who gave them different genders, differed more than the minds of individuals using the same language differ. I am inclined to think, that no difference in the question is produced by the greater or less use of prepositions, or of terminations, or of articles, or of any other contrivance to accomplish the end. *The same reason* produces the same end, by various and different means. The means in language depend on its prevailing analogies, modified and directed by a thousand associations. But, why should gender at all be attributed to inanimate objects? The answer to this question, leads to the solution of the problem. It is founded on observed, or supposed resemblance in inanimate objects to animals, and then in the names of other objects to those previously made male or female, from observed or supposed resemblance to male or female animals. But, the *same objects often possess points of resemblance both to males and females.* The point of resemblance that an object may have to a male, directs the gender of its name in one country, and the point of resemblance that it may have to a female, directs the gender of its name in another country; the names which they had adopted, whether by article, case, termination or preposition being applied to the accomplishment of their purpose. The same wind on one side of a mountain was rude, boisterous and cold; being thought to resemble males, its name, therefore, was masculine. On the other side of the mountain the same wind was gentle, bland and warm, and being thought to resemble females, its name was feminine. Is there no operation of reason in these different results?

Even when the resemblance is confined to the names themselves, or barely to their terminations, as *in penna and femina*, is it not *reason* that directs their classification as to gender and declension?

If every thing in language was arbitrary and independent of reason, whether affecting it by reasonable or capricious operations, the numerous and extensive analogies in it could never have existed, much less could they have been traced, as they have been, nor could the grammarians ever have arrived at those comprehensive, general truths, called rules of declension, comparison, conjugation and connexion of words. At the very origin of language, the powers of the mind began to operate on it as they do on every thing around and within us. These powers which now direct our neological formations, directed our ancestors, and all mankind were affected in their application to language as to every other subject by the progress of knowledge, by climate, geographical position, prevailing pursuits, and those thousand other circumstances which have produced diversities of national character, manners, customs, &c. &c.

Experiment in this as in many other matters, leads to the discovery of the truth. Set four or five children who are not to communicate with each other, to classing and gendering the inanimate objects around them, according to resemblances which they can discover in the objects, to males or females. The result will satisfy the experimentalist. He will have the same object in different classes, and of different genders. And the little reasoners, will readily make

him understand the resemblances which have directed them. When they are informed of each other's classification and gendering, they will some times find great difficulty in unraveling the intellectual web which another has woven; and when they have accomplished it, each one will contend for the greater propriety of his own work, pointing out the supposed errors and inconsistencies of the others, like a philosopher. Need we *then* think it unnatural or unaccountable, that the same object and consequently its sign, is of different genders in different languages?

Note E.

As "use renders words intelligible," it would seem to be of little consequence what names we give to things. But these names re-act upon the mind, and frequently, in consequence of previous associations, become the source of erroneous conceptions and reasonings.

I therefore think the advice of M. Bergman very good, "Ne faites graces a aucune denomination impropre. Ceux qui savent déja entendront toujours: Ceux qui ne savent pas encore entendront plutot." The correction and limitation of terms, tend much to the advancement of knowledge.

Dr. Reid resolved the ancient *Fantasy*, (the modern *association* of ideas) into habit, conceiving it not to be an original faculty of the mind.

Mr. Stewart resolved habit into the association of ideas; and Mr. Brown has introduced the term *simple suggestion*, not only to denote the association of ideas, but other states of the mind heretofore designated by other terms which he considers not so definite. All this has a tendency to make *us reflect* that we may ascertain with precision, the nature of that state of the mind which we are used to denote by any particular expression, and whether such expression has any tendency to lead us astray. To the striking instances of *the effects* produced by the association of ideas, or simple suggestion, mentioned by Capt. Cook and Doctor Rush, I will add one which came under my own observation. A pupil of mine gave to an old *African* woman a *Cocoa nut*: it was the first she had seen since she was forced from her native country. She held it from her as if doubting whether her eyes did not deceive her, then she embraced it, kissed it, and burst into an agony of tears.

Note F.

An attempt is often made by parents and instructors, to teach the grammmar to children entirely unprepared to comprehend it, and consequently, often do they fail. It is treated by many persons as an affair which requires *memory only*. It must be understood, or it is of no use, even if remembered. It is said, it may be committed to memory *now*, and understood *hereafter*. That is to

ny it may hereafter be unlearned and learned anew, attended by the great difficulty of disconnecting all the misconceptions and false associations that will, in spite of parents and teachers, become connected with any form of words committed to memory without being understood.

A previous preparation is indispensable to the production of any beneficial result. I have seen letters written by boys of fifteen years old, who were said to be good grammarians, and who could repeat to you every general rule in Mr. Murray's excellent grammar, which letters would disgrace a well-taught child of seven years old.

Grammar may be emphatically styled the history of the connexions between the visible and audible world of words, and the invisible world of thought and feeling. Language is the wonderful messenger, the winged mercury of the mind—Its study is in the highest degree metaphysical. Should parents make this the "first field" of warring thought to their children? It is worse than labour lost. May I be permitted to suggest to them, that the field of *Perception* is the first which *Nature* presents to children: Parents should follow her example. Here should elementary instruction commence—Here, first, should "thoughts engage, and words in skirmish mix." Let their children read Natural History, Physics, Chymistry, any thing that treats of what they can *see*, *hear*, *taste*, *touch* and *smell*. On these subjects, let them dwell till they have learned to think, to reason, to judge. They will then have acquired a stock of thoughts and words, the materials for grammatical study. Then, and not till then, are they prepared for it. This suggestion results from the consideration of our nature, confirmed in its force by the experience of many judicious instructors, as well as by my own. Fortunately for the rising generation, many able writers and authors have devoted their time and talents to the compilation and production of proper elementary books, some of which I beg leave to mention here—Among them are, Mr. Thomas Day's "Little Jack," and his "Sandford and Merton"—Mrs. Barbauld's "Books for children"—Dr. Aikins' "Evenings at Home"—Miss Edgeworth's—Joyce's—Berquin's—De Foe's—Mrs. Wakefield's—Smellie's—Goldsmith's—"The book of Trades"—Woodhouslie's—Le Sage's, or rather Las Cases'—Bigland's—Murray's, and many other works. With the assistance of these, a child may surely be kept profitably employed in the acquisition of just ideas and of appropriate terms, till his faculties, sufficiently exercised by gradual instruction on subjects suited to their gradual developement, shall be ripe for *reflection*, which by nature, succeeds *observation* in its developement, because it can only be useful when employed on the materials which observation has supplied.

Observing this order of education, we are most apt to succeed. When the pupil perceives that he advances at every step, he feels the universal and rational incentive, success. His application becomes closer, his success greater, and *his habits* become the ablest auxiliaries to himself and to his instructor. "A child is taught to walk on smooth ground, and no persons in their senses would put an infant on its legs for the first time, on rugged rocks."

But above all, we should *converse with children, not lecture* them; we should excite in them a rational curiosity, leading their thoughts by the

Note H.

The application of Induction to the philosophy of the mind, has given to many men great power over others.

It enables the man of observation and talents, to know the thoughts and to exercise a power over the actions of others, in a manner which to them is entirely incomprehensible. The master-spirits of mankind have all made their knowledge of the minds of men the lever by which they have moved the world. Resting their knowledge of the mind upon the known wishes, passions, prejudices, superstitions and prevailing associations of men, they have turned them to their own purposes. But "He who has been accustomed to such discrimination as this science requires, will not easily be imposed upon by that confusion of ideas which warps the judgments of the multitude in moral, religious, and political enquiries;"* nor will he easily be made an instrument to serve the purposes of the designing or ambitious.

Note I.

"As use renders it intelligible," a word or even part of a word *being an object of perception*, is enough to suggest to the mind the whole group of which *it was a part*. That group was formerly in many instances a whole regular sentence, which for the sake of brevity has been gradually trimmed down to a word, or even to the part of a word.

Is it not remarkable, that De Brosses after having discovered that Prepositions "sont *des formules abregées* dans tous les langues pour circumstancier les idées," should still not be able, as he says, "d'assigner la cause de leur origine?"

The author of "Les Lettres Chinoises," speaking of the means by which superstition has been most strengthened, says that sculpture and painting by presenting *to the eye* objects of perception, have greatly contributed to its influence. "Les poetes ne parlent qu'a l'esprit, les peintres parlent *aux yeux*: cette derniere façon de s'enoncer, est bien plus a la portée du vulgaire que les autres." A belief in traveller's tales, indeed credulity itself was assisted by the same means. The mind had *something real to connect with its vain imaginings*. "Apres que le sculpteur avait fait un dieu, il tailloit un centaure, et le centaure etoit adopté par le peuple ainsi que la divinité." Letter the 22d.

* *Stewart.*

Note K.

The word *war* not very long ago was written *weir*, and the pronunciation corresponded with its orthography—

"These tears that I shed
They are all for my *dear*,
And no for the dangers
Attendant on *weir*."

Song Lochaber.

Note L.

"Let me be permitted to mention here again, that I have reduced the whole science of logic to the observation of two facts which result manifestly from the scrupulous examination of our intellectual operations. The first is, that our perceptions being every thing for us, we are perfectly, completely, and necessarily, sure of all that we actually feel. The second, which is but a consequence of that, is, that none of our judgments taken separately can be erroneous, since for the very reason that we see one idea in another, it must be actually there; but that their falsity, when it takes place, is purely relative to all the anterior judgments which we permit to subsist, and consists in this, that we believe *the idea* in which *we see a new element to be the same we have always had under the same sign, while it is really different*, since the new element we actually see there, is incompatible with some of those which we have previously seen there. So that to avoid contradiction, it would be necessary either to take away the former, or not to admit the latter." See the translation of Count Destutt Tracy's Elements of Ideology, revised and corrected by Mr. Jefferson.

Note M.

All that I understand by *the relation* of words to each other, is that state of mind which is produced by the connected consideration of them, and which would not arise from their separate consideration. A word may be thought to be the sign of something, which, from the mention of another word, is instantly known to mean something else that we had not thought of, from the incompatibility of

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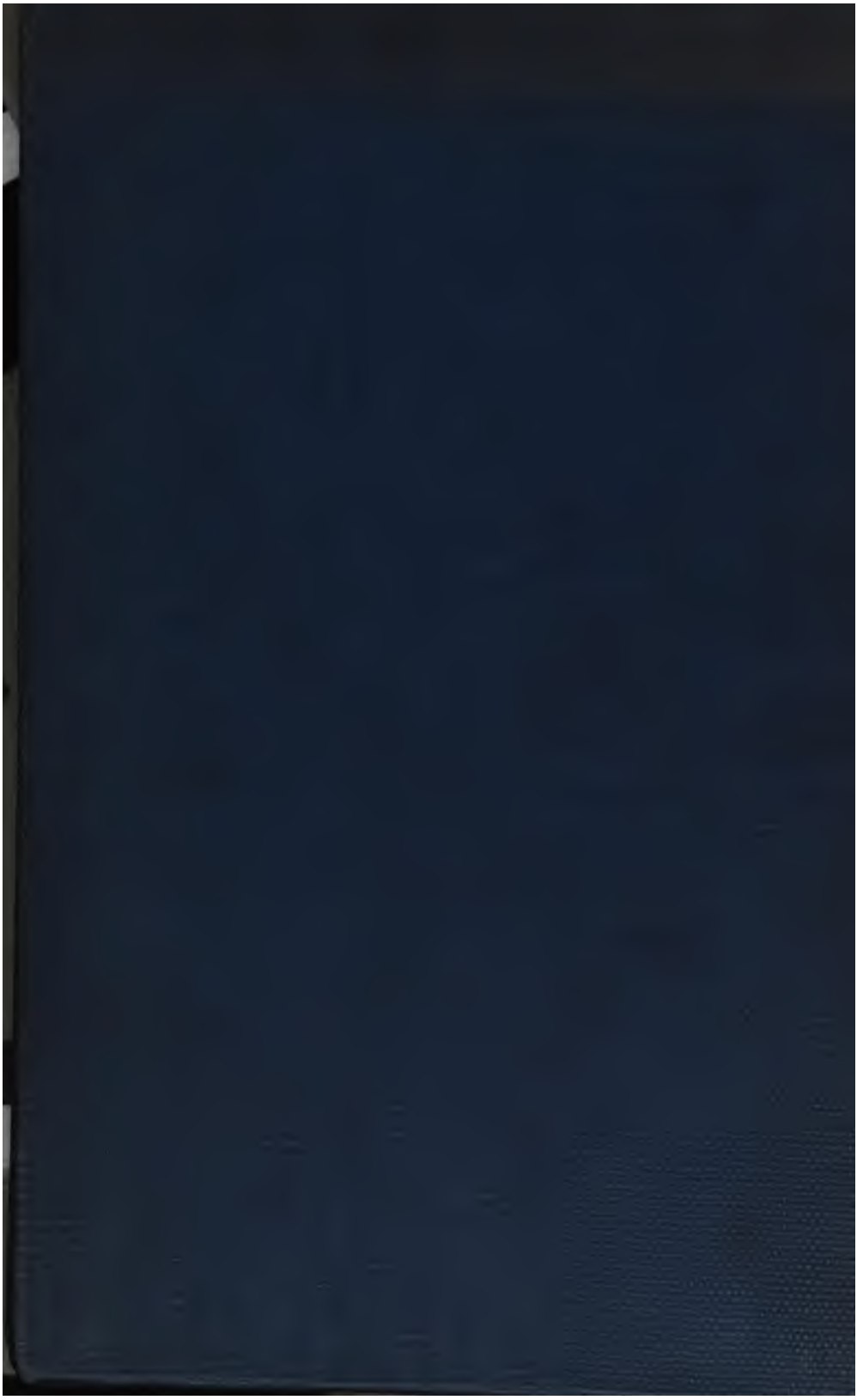
the meaning first suggested, with that of the following word, to produce the sentific suggestion. When, to ascertain the meaning of any word in a sentence *we consult the context*, it is nothing more than to seek for that compatibility of ideas which, when attributed to the signs, will make sense. In doing this, we either find that the expressions convey a complex state of mind previously felt, or a new state of mind which may arise from a newly discovered compatibility of ideas. The latter we denominate *originality* of thought in others, when suggested to us by them. It is entitled to the same name when it is suggested by a comparison of our own ideas, even without the use of signs, and merely from the presence of objects to the senses. In the latter case, there is nothing present to the senses but the objects. The rest of the process is entirely mental without any *intermedia*, the complex state of mind arising *sua sponte*. What is there in this process, which those words in language, that are *supposed* to express *the relations* of things and of thoughts to each other, represent? If there be any thing, I have seen *no account of it* by any writer, nor have I been able to discover it. It is like many other received opinions,—an hypothesis unsupported by proof, and believed without that irresistible consciousness of its truth which forces us to admit all ultimate facts, and without being arrived at by rational induction. All that has been discovered in language by the researches of able Etymologists, has a direct tendency to prove that there are no such words in language. In tracing them to their origin, they arrive at a noun, or a verb admitted to contain a noun.

Note N.

After a perusal of the following quotations from the works of that great and good man John Locke, no reader who is a lover of candour and truth, will be disposed to treat with severity and rigour, the errors or inconsistencies into which those may fall whose object manifestly is the discovery of truth, and the improvement of mankind. All who know what was the character of Locke, must admire and respect him, not only from choice, but necessity. Perhaps the introduction of his *triangle* as an illustration, may be thought inconsistent with that veneration for his memory as an author and a man, which I feel. To prevent any erroneous inference of this kind may be of little consequence to me individually, yet it is but justice to prevent it. While in pursuit of truth, I submit to no authority; yet I would not willingly be thought to treat with disrespect, much less with levity, any who has been, or who is engaged in the same pursuit, whether in my opinion he is in the right, or in the "royal road" to his object.

"*General* and *universal* belong not to the real existence of things, but are the inventions and creatures of the understanding, made by it for its own use, and concern only signs. Universality belongs not to things themselves, which are all of them particular in their existence. When, therefore, we quit particulars, the generals that rest are only creatures of our own making; their general nature being nothing but the capacity they are put into, of signifying or representing many particulars." These acute remarks are in his third book. In his fourth book he says—"Does it not require some pains and skill to form the general idea of a triangle; (which is yet none of the most abstract, comprehensive, and difficult,) for, it must be neither oblique nor rectangle, neither equilateral, equicrural nor scalenon, but all and none of these at once.—In effect it is something imperfect, that cannot exist, an idea whereiñ some parts of several inconsistent and different ideas are put together."